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Near East & South Asia

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Algeria

Ghozali on 'Uncontrollable' Press Freedom

LD1805143191 Algiers APS in English 1307 GMT 18 May 91

[Text] Algiers, 18/5/91 (APS)—Minister of Foreign Affairs Sid Ahmed Ghozali considered on Thursday that national press are within a situation of "uncontrollable freedom", reckoning, however, that is "totally independent from the power". Having been the host of the national broadcasting, Ghozali noted that Algeria's image" is much more made by the press than by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs".

Ghozali pointed out that media should at the same time "preserve their mission of public service and bear the message that the government does have the right and the duty to transmit to the public opinion".

Furthermore, the minister of foreign affairs considered that the press in Algeria in totally independent from the power. "Many countries have some difficulties to understand it, said he, and reproach us the attacks of our press against them". Ghozali noted, after, that Algerian media should not take over the French press or Western media in their campaigns against brotherly and friendly countries and thus be the implementors of a strategy that it is not theirs.

Asked' about Algeria's position vis-a-vis the Western Sahara question, Ghozali considered that the latter has not changed since 1975 till now, pointing out that Algeria has always defended a peaceful and political solution. It even advocated in this regard, the holding of a referendum under the aegis of the UN. "The Security Council approved the UN secretary general's plan, therefore we did see the result for which we have always mobilized our diplomacy", stated the minister.

As for the question of the withdrawal of the accreditation of the "LE MONDE" paper correspondent here, Ghozali declared "later has published workings out" [as received]. Asked about the financing of some political parties by foreign countries, the FIS (Islamic Front of Salvation) at this juncture and the explanations that Algeria ought to ask, Ghozali pointed out that Algeria did not ask the Saudi ambassador more explanations since a Saudi senior official made a declaration in this regard.

Ennahdha Leader on Election, Civil War Likelihood

LD2305134991 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] In the country, with the date of the general elections getting nearer, the political parties are intensifying their activities. In the space of a few days, the leader of the Ennahdha movement, Shaykh Abdallah Djaballah, twice met with the activists of his movement in the capital, Algiers. This morning, Mr. Djaballah chaired a meeting at Salle Afrique [movie theater in Algiers] which was attended by representatives of 38 provinces where Ennahdha candidates are standing for the forthcoming general elections. The aim of this meeting is for the activists to consult one another to examine the electoral process and unite their viewpoints on how to run the affairs of the state in the event the Ennahdha movement comes to power.

Our colleague Hizia Hideb attended this meeting and conducted the following interview with the leader of Ennahdha movement, Mr. Abdallah Djaballah.

[Begin recording] [Hideb] [Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) leader] Mr. Abassi Madani recently gave a one week deadline to the president of the republic to set the date of the presidential elections. What is your comment?

[Djaballah] I have said that I do not wish to interfere in the affairs of the political parties, irrespective of their trends. I also believe that each party assumes responsibility for its statements and responsibility for its positions. As far as I am concerned, my main resonsibility is to work in earnest and with objectivity to convince Algerian society that the Islamic political system is the best for it.

[Hideb] With regard to the general elections, how far has the question of an alliance within the Islamic trend gone?

[Djaballah] So far, and as is clear, we have reached no significant results. We have talked several times about this question but we as a movement, I meant as part of the Islamic trend, have fulfilled our responsibility completely. We are eager to see the unification of the Islamic trend and to see the Islamists on a single list, with the best suited Islamist candidates running for the election in every constituency. But this was unfortunately to no avail. For our part, we have adhered to this formula and we presented candidates only in some constituencies and not in others, and we urged the other Islamic factions to vote for the most suitable candidate. [end recording]

Regarding the likelihood of a civil war breaking out in light of some indicators which appear every now and then, Mr Djaballah says:

[Begin recording] [Djaballah] I do not rule this out although I believe that the chances [for this to happen] are not great. Why do I not rule it out? I do not rule it out for more than one reason. The first reason is that unfortunately the Algerian Constitution has planted the first seeds for such a thing. I hope that an opportunity will be given to make a legal, objective, and scientific reading of the Algerian Constitution. The laws in force today are also laws which planted the seeds for such a thing. As we see, these laws are unconstitutional. We had hoped to see the head of state or the speaker of the National People's Assembly exercise their constitutional rights and refute the unconstitutionality of these laws. If they had done that, they would have spared society numerous problems. Having said that, I believe that the issue of a civil war has been exaggerated and I rule out. I mean I prefer to say that the likelihood of a civil war in our society is in fact remote, God willing.

Egypt

Cairo-Washington Discord Over Gulf Security

PM2305152091 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 21 May 91 p 1

['Abd-al-Sattar Abu-Husayn report: "Differences Erupt Between Cairo and Washington"]

[Text] Diplomatic sources have revealed to AL-SHA'B information about the differences that have erupted between Cairo and Washington after the decison to withdraw the Egyptian forces from the Gulf.

The sources said that Cairo received with utmost dissatisfaction the information which revealed the role of the Gulf-U.S. alliance in excluding Egypt from Gulf security arrangements. Cairo discovered that the decision by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to dispense with the Egyptian forces after Kuwait's liberation was made in response to U.S. advice after Washington ascertained that Cairo was insisting that Gulf security arrangements be primarily Arab, whereas Washington insisted that the Arab forces' role in the security arrangments should not exceed the the non-U.S. forces' role during the war, that is, that it be confined to providing legitimate cover for the U.S. military presence in the region.

In the wake of the decision to withdraw the Egyptian forces from the Gulf, the sources said, Cairo sought to prevent Washington from taking exclusive charge of security arrangements and the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. President Mubarak's tour of a number of European states, Syria, and Libya highlights the importance of a European role in a Middle East peace conference—a role which Israel insists on avoiding, and the U.S. Administration shares the same view—and also highlights the need to secure an Arab view of security arrangements and peace in the region, especially through Syria, the major partner in the Arab forces that participated in the Gulf war.

The sources said that relations between Cairo and Washington are expected to deteriorate further in the coming period.

Foreign Minister Comments on Baker Remarks

NC2305185291 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1510 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Cairo, 23 May (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has reiterated that Egypt has a firm and clear stand on the need to give impetus to the peace process and take practical steps toward a just settlement of the closely linked questions of the Palestine issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Commenting today on U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives yesterday evening, Minister Musa said Baker's remarks on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the U.S. stand on Israeli settlements, which are viewed as an obstacle to peace, as well as Baker's remarks on the role the United Nations and other parties can play help give a clear picture of the current efforts to set the peace process in motion.

On the composition of the Palestinian delegation, the foreign minister said contacts are still continuing in this regard and no final formula has yet been reached.

AL-AKHBAR Comments

NC2405073891 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0621 GMT 24 May 91

[Text] Cairo, 24 May (MENA)—The newspaper AL-AKHBAR today comments on the statement by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs about the outcome of his tours in the Middle East. The paper says that Baker's remarks were marked with optimism in contrast to earlier statements by some U.S. officials who acknowledged various significant obstacles toward settling the Palestinian problem.

The newspaper cites Baker as saying that various parties have reached several points of general agreement on a just and lasting peace settlement through direct negotiations on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. The paper notes that these resolutions are based on the principle of exchanging land for peace and maintain that land cannot be acquired by force. The paper says Baker's remarks mean that the Israeli side has approved the principle of exchanging land for peace which is the basis for any genuine peace in the region, a matter which Tel Aviv rulers are eager to deny on every occasion.

AL-AKHBAR says: It is regrettable that Baker said in his testimony that the parties concerned have agreed that the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians will aim at achieving temporary self-rule and the final status of the occupied territories will be decided later.

The paper says that all those who know Israel's leaders and their procrastinating tactics, tactics which they employ to gain time until they can reach their goals, may easily predict what will happen with the negotiations. Israel will simply keep coming up with pretexts to make the negotiations last for years.

Mubarak Adviser Interviewed on Peace Process

TA1705101491 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 17 May 91 p 14

[Interview with Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak's political adviser, by Cairo correspondent Dan Avidan; place and date not given]

[Text] [Avidan] In your opinion, what are the chances of convening a regional conference?

[Al-Baz] I believe the chances of convening a peace conference are good. I would not call it a regional

conference because I would like to be rid of the argument over the conference's name. What is important is to have a conference in which Israel and the Arab side—Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinians—would meet and conduct negotiations face to face, with the help of the two superpowers and European representatives and with the United Nations playing a certain role.

Direct negotiations would continue for a certain period of time. We would discuss all the issues pertaining to the conflict: the Palestinian problem, the question of Israel's relations with Syria and Jordan, and the Lebanese issue. Later we would discuss regional cooperation in certain areas, such as a ban on weapons of mass destruction. At a certain stage we may agree to impose certain limitations on the level of armaments, including conventional weapons.

I believe that most Arabs and Israelis realize now that their future security does not lie in the acquisition of sophisticated weapons, that our problems will not be solved through military means, but only through mutual recognition and coexistence based on the belief that your presence does not pose a threat to us Arabs and that our presence does not pose a threat to you. What poses a threat is certain policy lines, and not Israel's presence in the heart of the Arab world or the Arab presence around Israel. This does not threaten anybody's security. Jews and Arabs have lived together for hundreds of years.

Therefore, I believe that the chances of convening a conference are very good. We must work toward convening a conference. If the Arabs and Israelis recognize the serious need for peace, they must take serious action on the negotiations. Israel has always said that it needs an Arab partner to sit down and negotiate. Fortunately, the Arab partner exists today; all the Arabs want to sit down and conduct negotiations with Israel. The move adopted by the Gulf countries, their willingness to send an observer on their behalf to the peace conference, is a very important development. It is very bad that certain government circles in Israel downplayed the importance of this move. This is the first time that Arab countries that are not in a state of war with Israel have expressed their readiness to make peace with it.

[Avidan] The semiofficial Egyptian paper AL-JUMHURIYAH this week printed an article by its editor, Mahfuz al-Ansari, in which he wrote that it was unwise on the part of President Bush to push the Saudis to join the political process at such an early stage, because they should be the last and not the first to join the process.

[Al-Baz] The confrontation states will be the first to join the process. If there is a problem between Israel and the Palestinians, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon, the Arab countries that do not neighbor Israel will not volunteer to make peace with it; they cannot. The desire and willingness of any Arab country to make peace with Israel depends to a large extent on Israel's willingness to make peace with the Palestinians. There is no inherent conflict between the Arabs and Israel. The conflict erupted as a result of the Palestinian problem and, as is known, this is a new phenomenon both in the history of the Arabs and of the Jews.

Jews and Arabs have always lived together. They have lived together in the Arab Peninsula, Palestine, New York, and Spain; they lived together in the Arab countries for hundreds of years. The hatred and hostility began this century and, consequently, are not deep-rooted. This is not a racist or a religious conflict. This is a political conflict which is misunderstood by some people because of ignorance or propaganda.

[Avidan] Will Egypt support the convening of a peace conference if Syria does not attend?

[Al-Baz] No, we insist on the participation of all the Arab countries involved in the conflict, and Syria is an important part of it. You must include everybody in the conference. It is also in Israel's interest for all the Arabs to make peace with it. Assuming that we solve the Palestine problem, assuming that we solve the Lebanese issue and we make Israel withdraw from south Lebanon, assuming that we solve the question of relations between Jordan and Israel, Israel would still be facing an enemy in the north: Syria. The prospects for the future would remain uncertain; the Israelis and the Syrians would remain worried.

We have learned from our own experience that to anchor peace, to make it penetrate the hearts and minds of people, it must be a comprehensive peace. As long as part of the conflict remains unsolved, the peace will be incomplete. Were I in Israel's shoes, I would say that all the Arab partners must participate in the conference because I want to solve my problem with all the Arab countries once and for all. Otherwise, Israel's security will be in doubt.

[Avidan] To what extent can Egypt influence Syria to moderate its positions, particularly on the question of the UN role in the peace conference? Can Egypt help attain a compromise between the Syrian and the Israeli positions on this point?

[Al-Baz] First of all, Egypt is not a neutral participant in the talks between Israel and the Arabs. Such a role does not befit Egypt; this is the job of the United States, the Soviet Union, or the Europeans. Egypt's job is that of a country that is one of the Arab participants; we are part of the Arab negotiating team. Our job is to make sure that the two sides, Israel and the Arab team, make progress toward meeting halfway. We do not want to see any side staying out of the conference and blocking the road to peace.

[Avidan] But could you play a moderating role with regard to Syria?

[Al-Baz] The Syrians have adopted a certain position, which is basically a moderate position. They favor convening a conference. They had previously insisted on

an international conference with the participation of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, in addition to the countries directly involved. They have now changed their minds, and they agree to the idea of a peace conference to be held under the aegis of the Soviet Union, the United States, and EC representatives. They had previously insisted that the conference be based on all the UN resolutions pertaining to the Israeli-Arab conflict, as well as the principle of "land for peace." Now they agree that the conference be based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338. These are important steps. They have expressed their desire to strive toward a mutually accepted formula which would enable us to overcome the snags concerning Palestinian representation in the conference. They do not insist on a separate Palestinian delegation.

[Avidan] Do the Syrians think that the Palestinians will come to the conference as part of a united delegation? Do they agree to the formation of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation?

[Al-Baz] The Syrians do not object to all these formulas. Their first priority is to have a Palestinian delegation, but they are not opposed to a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, to a united Arab delegation, or any other formula that enables us to enter negotiations.

As for the UN role in the conference, the Syrians have a matter-of-fact position. They believe that in view of the fact that the conference will convene to implement UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, we must accept the UN presence and should not try to bypass it. As for attempts to impose solutions, Syria believes that all the participants in the conference agree that no solution whatsoever should be imposed on the sides.

I am not saying that this position should obstruct the process or the hope of convening the conference. Their position on the UN question could be an obstacle, and we will have to settle it.

I am not optimistic enough to think that the conference will be able to convene within a few weeks, but I believe we should set ourselves the goal of convening it before the end of this year. This will be the case if we keep the ball rolling, if we see to it that the Americans, the Soviets, and the Europeans continue to be active and we pursue our own dialogue. Egypt communicates with everybody: Israel, all the Arab countries, the Palestinians, the two superpowers, and the Europeans.

[Avidan] Do the Syrians agree that no solution whatsoever will be imposed on the sides?

[Al-Baz] Definitely. I asked President al-Asad whether he can conceive of striving toward an imposed solution, and he said no. According to him, Syria is not striving toward an imposed solution, because any solution that is not accepted by all the sides of their own free will, will not be a lasting solution. He also said that when Syria speaks about the UN role, it is not trying to do away with or downplay the importance of direct negotiations. According to him, when we sit face to face in negotiations, we will not turn our backs to each other. Nevertheless, al-Asad also said that in order to implement Security Council Resolution 242, we must preserve the UN presence. According to him, the UN representative will be able to voice his opinion, but not to force the Arabs or Israel to act on it. In case of a dispute, the UN representative will be asked to provide the UN interpretation of a certain resolution.

[Avidan] For example, would we ask the UN representative for his interpretation of Resolution 242?

[Al-Baz] Exactly! When we disagree over a certain interpretation, we will ask the superpowers to bridge our differences. The Syrians asked me what is wrong with that, and I said that the Israelis fear a situation where the two superpowers, the Europeans, and the United Nations will say: This is the solution. To which the Syrians replied: We can guarantee that this will not happen and that if it does happen, we will object to it.

[Avidan] You have recently met frequently with President al-Asad. Do you think Syria will be prepared to sign a peace treaty with Israel, as Egypt did, if Israel withdraws from the territories and a solution is found to the Palestine problem?

[Al-Baz] Definitely!

[Avidan] Will it not settle for a state of nonbelligerency with Israel?

[Al-Baz] Definitely not! They are prepared to sign a peace treaty with Israel that will include an end to the state of war and of belligerence. The peace they are prepared to establish entails bilateral relations and open borders, similar to those between Egypt and Israel, a peace in which the Syrians and the Israelis see each other as neighbors and, after a while, as good friends.

[Avidan] Are you talking about a contractual peace, similar to the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty?

[Al-Baz] Certainly! This is obvious. They are prepared to establish a contractual peace.

[Avidan] How does Egypt perceive the Syrian position with regard to the peace conference?

[Al-Baz] We believe that the Syrian position concerning the conference is positive, and we think that there is room for give-and-take between all the sides. Objectively speaking, the Arabs have budged from their previous positions. Our positions today are different from those of two years or even one year ago: We agree to convene a peace conference without the participation of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, a peace conference that does not mention the rights of the Palestinian people.

[Avidan] Would the peace conference not discuss the Palestinians' rights?

[Al-Baz] We will discuss them, of course, but the conference will not be based on t... Palestine problem. The Syrians have always said that Israel must promise to withdraw from all Arab territories before negotiations are launched. Now their only condition is that the negotiations be held without any preconditions, and this is a very sensible position.

The rights of the Palestinians will be discussed. We have our position, and you will present yours. If the rights of the Palestinians are not honored, the Palestinian people will feel that an injustice has been done them. Such a feeling of suffering because of injustice is very bad; it is similar to the injustice committed against the Jewish people in Europe and throughout its history. We do not want the tragedies of the past to recur. We want the Palestinians to live honorably and to contribute to the peace process.

I feel sorry when I see that certain segments of the Israeli people are prepared to make peace with the Arabs, with the exception of the Palestinians. They believe that making peace with the Palestinians would involve the return of the West Bank and Gaza to Arab sovereignty.

Some of them suffer from an ideological complex that leads to ideological dogmatism. These are the Likud's people. Others may have other reasons. They believe that the territories are vital to Israel's defense for security reasons, and they want to make sure that Israel's security will not be jeopardized.

We say, as did President Bush, that the best guarantee for security does not lie in territory or military supremacy, but in mutual consent and faith in peaceful coexistence. We believe basically that our interests do not contradict each other. There need not be a contradiction between the interests of Jews and Arabs, of Israelis and Arabs, and of Israelis and Palestinians.

In my opinion, the Arabs have gone a long way, while Israel has not budged even one inch. The Israeli position on the settlements is worse today than in the past.

[Avidan] Are you talking about the Likud government's stand?

[Al-Baz] Precisely, I am referring to the government. We should remember that the settlement policy is causing the Arabs to mistrust the entire peace process. Between Baker's first and third visit to the region, for example, 86,000 dunams of Arab land in the territories was expropriated for the benefit of settlements. How can a Palestinian believe in or trust the peace process, if every day, lands are expropriated for this cause?

When we signed the Camp David accords, the Likud government made the commitment that Israel would abstain from establishing settlements as long as negotiations continued. At that time, everyone understood that we were referring to the Palestinian question. Later, the Israelis gave this commitment a very distorted interpretation, saying that the government had only undertaken to stop setting up settlements for the duration of the negotiations between Egypt and Israel over the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. This is a false interpretation: The question of stopping settlement pertained more to the Palestine issue than to Egypt, because we had solved the problem of the Israeli settlements in the Sinai even before that, and we had agreed that everybody should be evacuated and the inhabitants should leave.

As for Israel's position on the composition of the Palestinian delegation to negotiations, Israel agreed, two years ago, to a Palestinian delegation that would be comprised of several deportees and a few East Jerusalem residents who have an additional address in the territories. Today, Israel is rejecting it. Thus, instead of softening, the Israeli stance is becoming more inflexible.

As I have pointed out, the Arab position has made progress; Israel may regard this progress as insufficient, but the Arabs have made progress. What we need is progress in the positions of both sides, so that negotiations can be started.

[Avidan] We discussed Syria's position, and I would like to return to it for a moment. In the past, when Egypt decided to make peace with Israel, it conducted direct negotiations without the framework of an international conference. Why is Syria not showing a similar readiness? Why does it insist on a formal, rigid peace conference? Does this not indicate an lack of change in the Syrian position?

[Al-Baz] No. There has been a change in the Syrian position. As I said, the Arabs used to insist on an international conference with the participation of the five permanent Security Council members. Their claim was that, in 1973, Israel had agreed to the concept of a conference sponsored by the two superpowers; and that, later, in 1977, Israel had agreed to a reconvening of the Geneva conference. At present, Israel is saying no and insisting on the convening of a regional conference and so forth, rather than an international conference. Since we are committed to the issue, we said: All right, we will not insist on an international conference; however, we will not have a regional conference either. We will agree to a peace conference, but we will not call it a peace conference, because the name does not matter. This means that the Syrians are not "bogged down" by procedures, names, or symbols. They talk about the UN role, not as a formality, but as substance, because they want to make sure that what Israel is striving for is the implementation of Resolution 242.

We are talking here about not conducting negotiations in "neutral gear." Because, if the negotiations are conducted in "neutral," we will probably achieve no understanding on any issue, and we will not arrive anywhere. We need to have some point of reference, and that point of reference is the implementation of Resolution 242. Because this is the common denominator.

[Avidan] In other words, Resolution 242 means an Israeli withdrawal from the territories.

[Al-Baz] Right you are. Resolution 242 does not speak only of a withdrawal, however. It speaks of withdrawal, of putting an end to the state of belligerency, and of establishing peace between Israel and the Arabs. And this is the key. There is nothing wrong with the Arab insistence that Israel withdraw from the territories because deep in our hearts, we believe that without a withdrawal, the Arabs will make no peace of any kind whatsoever with Israel, that no peace will be attainable. You must understand this. You must accept the fact that you should consent to the idea of territories for peace.

[Avidan] Are the Syrians ready to accept the territories-for-peace formula?

[Al-Baz] Yes. The Likud's stubborn insistence on the concept of "peace for peace," while keeping the territories under Israeli sovereignty, are baloney. It will never work. The Syrians are not trying to foil the conference. We asked them in so many words, and they told us.

[Avidan] They are saying that the United Nations should be the place to which the sides appeal; the "muraja'at" in the event direct negotiations stall.

[Al-Baz] Well, a "muraja'at" means the element to which one resorts for advice, rather than for a decision; thus, the element would not be an arbitrator. What is wrong with that? The United Nations was the body that gave birth to Resolution 242; why can it not give an authoritative interpretation? The problem lies in providing an interpretation and supplying the parties with assistance without forcing them to accept anything. Because, as I have already told you, we have a dialogue with the Syrians (President Mubarak will meet with President al-Asad in Damascus the day after tomorrow—Avidan), and we know the Syrians will oppose a separate peace. They will not agree to a separate Syrian-Israeli peace agreement.

[Avidan] Do they want the Palestinian issue to be solved as well?

[Al-Baz] We think so, too. We have to solve the entire conflict once and for all. If there is a peace arrangement with the Arab countries, while the Palestine problem remains unresolved, the entire settlement will be shaky, and the peace will be cold; not the warm peace we desire.

The circumstances can be even worse in the future. Right now, we have a fine opportunity to achieve a comprehensive settlement. Why not use it? Why miss this chance for a permanent peace?

[Avidan] Suppose the Likud government announces that it accepts the principle of "territories for peace." Will this cause the Syrians to agree to direct negotiations with Israel without the framework of an international conference?

[Al-Baz] Syria is ready to conduct direct negotiations with Israel. Let us assume the conference convenes today. Tomorrow, the permanent members of the Security Council will move into the background; they will not be present unless we summon them.

[Avidan] Will their representatives sit in another room?

[Al-Baz] Perhaps. They may return home, and they may return to their hotels. Or listen to the debates for awhile and then leave. Then, the Arabs and the Israelis will remain closeted for weeks in the conference hall, just as we, the Egyptians, did in the past. We conducted negotiations, Israel, Egypt, and the United States. We conducted negotiations on more than the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement; we conducted negotiations on autonomy, also. Israel took part in the negotiations, and the United States took part in them by being present. The U.S. presence did not harm the direct negotiations that the Israelis and the Egyptians held with each other.

[Avidan] But there was no peace conference then; there were direct contacts within the framework of the Israeli-Egyptian peace process.

[Al-Baz] The Israeli-Arab peace process will follow the same pattern. In principle, it will be an Israeli-Arab peace conference or an Israeli-Arab peace process. The Arabs and the Israelis will conduct negotiations, and if we are stuck, we will do what the Egyptians and the Israelis did at the time with the Americans. Had the Soviets been present at the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations, and had a UN representative been there, the results of the talks would not have been different.

If you remember the Mena House conference (held in Cairo), we invited the United States, the USSR, and a UN representative—General Selasvio [name as published]—to it.

[Avidan] But the UN representative had no role in the Mena House conference, while the Syrians want the United Nations to play a substantive role in these negotiations.

[Al-Baz] If Israel's Likud government accepts the "territories-for-peace" formula as part of the basis for the conference, I believe the Syrian position may change and become more flexible on this point.

[Avidan] Meaning that it can lead to a more flexible Syrian position?

[Al-Baz] Definitely.

[Avidan] Are there any other things which could render the Syrian position more flexible, which either the Israeli Government or another element could do?

[Al-Baz] It is primarily the point you have mentioned (that is, the acceptance of the formula of "territories for peace" by the Likud government).

[Avidan] How does Egypt see the Palestinian representation in the peace conference, mainly in view of the Israeli and U.S. objection to the inclusion of the PLO?

[Al-Baz] I believe no side should make an issue of the Palestinian representation. The Arabs made no problem

and created no difficulties about the issue of the Palestinian representation. Let us acknowledge the fact that the Palestinians themselves are very cooperative on this point. They did not want to make any difficulties, they did not want this to become an obstacle in the way of progress toward peace. On the contrary, you may have noticed that so far, the Palestinians have been...

[Avidan, interrupting] Sitting on the fence? As can be seen from the resolutions of the recent PLO Central Committee conference?

[Al-Baz] Precisely.

[Avidan] The bottom line of those resolutions is that the PLO remains sitting on the fence, and in the meantime it wishes to ascertain what direction the American initiative will take.

[Al-Baz] Precisely. If the initiative develops, they will be ready to cooperate. The PLO is not the problem. Today the PLO exists. After a Palestinian entity is established, there may be another Palestinian leadership. In the meantime, the PLO exists, and if Israel, the United States, or the West thinks the PLO should have no part in the conference, then we should let the Palestinians solve that problem.

[Avidan] How do you think the Palestinian representation will finally be resolved?

[Al-Baz] First of all, there could be a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation at the conference.

[Avidan] Is it feasible?

[Al-Baz] Yes. Also, there could be a united Arab delegation made up of Egyptian delegates, Syrian delegates, Palestinian delegates, and Jordanian delegates. The question of whom the Palestinian delegation represents should be asked differently. The delegation should represent the Palestinian people. Let us say that it will not represent an organization (the PLO—Avidan), just the Palestinian people. The Palestinians are determined to stick to their view that the PLO is their representative. It is nobody's job to tell them not to.

[Avidan] The PLO's representative status has not changed, from that point of view?

[Al-Baz] No, it has not changed. That is how the Palestinians feel. It is obviously the Palestinians' sentiment, both inside and outside the occupied territories. Let us then stop wasting so much time arguing about that; we should accept the Palestinian people's opinion on that point.

[Avidan] What role does Egypt envisage for Jordan in the peace conference? Do you think Jordan, along with delegates from the territories, can possibly represent the Palestinians at the conference?

[Al-Baz] Jordan cannot represent the Palestinians, but Jordan can participate and play a very important role in negotiations. It can set up a joint delegation with the Palestinians. Furthermore, if Jordan and the Palestinians agree to establish a confederation in the future, that can pave the way to negotiations.

[Avidan] As stated in the 1985 Amman agreement between Husayn and 'Arafat?

[Al-Baz] We are not talking about a reconstruction of the precise clauses of the Amman agreement, although a similar formula is possible. In addition, Jordan has a long border with Israel. We would like to make that border safe for Israelis as well as for Palestinians. I am not referring to the border between Jordan and the West Bank. In addition, Jordan can play a very important role in developing water resources, producing electrical energy, and permitting border crossings here and there. In addition, we have to appreciate the fact that 60 percent of the Jordanians are Palestinians.

[Avidan] Then Jordan is an indispensable partner in the peace conference?

[Al-Baz] Yes.

[Avidan] If the Baker initiative fails, will Egypt support the "resuscitation" of the Israeli Government's initiative of May 1989, which mentions elections in the territories?

[Al-Baz] We do not think Baker's initiative has failed.

[Avidan] But what will you do if it fails?

[Al-Baz] We are striving to prevent it from failing. We must make sure that the U.S. initiative succeeds, in particular now that the Soviet Union has joined the effort. It is a shame that so many past opportunities were missed, and we must not miss this one. We cannot say the Shamir plan will be a good substitute for the U.S. initiative. If Israel says that, the Arabs will say no; they will say the substitute should be an Arab plan, not a Shamir plan. Furthermore, we must not forget that the Israeli Government is avoiding its commitment to the idea of elections in the territories because several ministers of the Likud government oppose elections. So, the Shamir plan is irrelevant. It is a dead plan.

[Avidan] With your permission, a few more brief questions on regional issues. Why did Egypt withdraw its troops from the Gulf? Who will defend Saudi Arabia? And will Egypt support the incorporation of Israel in the future security arrangements in the region?

[Al-Baz] It is too soon to talk about assigning Israel a part in future security arrangements. The Arabs will be able to digest that idea only after they learn to perceive Israel as an element that helps them, rather than threatens them. We must be sensible. As long as most Arabs see Israel as a threat to their security, their attitude must change, and the way to bring about that change is to make peace, as the first move. You must prove to the Arabs that Israel can be a good neighbor and a support to the region's security, rather than a threat to their security.

First of all, Israel and the Palestinians must make peace, as should Israel and the Syrians, Israel and the Lebanese, Israel and the Jordanians.

If we all agree to certain arrangements with regard to banning the possession of weapons of total destruction, and later perhaps even to curtailing conventional weapons, then peace (security) agreements will follow throughout the area. Then, when the Arabs learn to be in touch with Israel and to share border security arrangements with it, the second step will be security arrangements outside the border areas. If there is an outside threat to the region, let us say, a threat against a certain party....

[Avidan, interrupting] From Iran, for instance?

[Al-Baz] I would not regard Iran as a threat to the region, because I do not think Iran can pose a serious threat to the region for any length of time. I do not want to point to any country or name any particular country; it will depend on the situation at the time. What will happen in the region and in the neighboring and adjacent areas in the next 25 or 50 years? Things can change. We never thought Iraq could pose a threat to another Arab country. Who would have thought Iraq would conquer Kuwait?

[Avidan] No one, not even the CIA.

[Al-Baz] Unfortunately, no one could have foreseen it. We will, however, certainly wish to establish some kind of cooperation with Israel, which may later include an agreement on certain future security arrangements.

[Avidan] Why does Saudi Arabia, which is at war with Israel, refuse to join the peace conference as a full partner?

[Al-Baz] It is not true; Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states are not at war with Israel. They have never declared war on Israel. They have signed no armistice agreements with Israel.

[Avidan] But Saudi Arabia did dispatch expeditionary troops in the various wars against Israel.

[Al-Baz] As several other Arab states, they sent mere token forces to some Arab countries, but they never declared war on Israel. All they have done was to honor the Arab League decisions with regard to the boycott of Israel. Only that. This was the only sign of hostility. The matter of the Saudi vote in the UN Security Council does not put them in the category of countries at war with Israel. They have never declared a state of war against Israel. Therefore, although they can be of help, it is unreasonable to expect them to be part of the negotiations, because we are talking here about ending the state of belligerency on the part of Arab countries, or Arab parties, which are at war with Israel.

The moment that is done, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, and the other Arab countries will have no legal basis for continuing the boycott against Israel. The boycott will be automatically revoked, as will be the Arabs' anti-Israeli votes at the United Nations; at the same time, the anti-Israeli propaganda will cease.

To tell you the truth, Saudi Arabia will have one problem that will have to be addressed seriously; I am referring to Jerusalem. Because Saudi Arabia is....

[Avidan, interrupting] The location of Islam's most sacred sites, and King Fahd is called the custodian of the two holy mosques in Mecca and Medina.

[Al-Baz] You are absolutely right. Fahd has a certain responsibility here. Thank you very much.

[Avidan] Thank you, Dr. al-Baz.

Qabus Meets 'Abd-al-Majid, Departs

NC2305122891 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman was given an official farewell ceremony at the al-Qubbah palace today.

President Husni Mubarak and Sultan Qabus held a closed meeting before the farewell ceremony. The talks during that meeting reflected full understanding between the two sides and showed that their views were identical on issues about bilateral relations and the post-war security situation in the Gulf.

The talks also discussed coordination within the framework of the Nonaligned Movement, which will hold a meeting in September.

Before leaving Cairo, His Majesty Sultan Qabus received Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, who expressed his gratitude to Sultan Qabus for supporting his nomination as Arab League secretary general. Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid expressed his willingness to make every possible effort to support joint Arab action and bring peace and stability to the region.

Mubarak on Peace Efforts, African Problems

NC2305121091 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1025 GMT 23 May 91

[Excerpts] Cairo, 23 May (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak received the African Journalists Union delegation under new chairman Mahfuz al-Ansari at the presidential office in Heliopolis this morning. Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif and presidential press secretary Muhammad 'Abd-al-Mun'im attended the meeting.

Al-Ansari said that a number of Arab and African issues were discussed at the meeting and that President Mubarak was frank and clear, as usual. He answered questions and queries by the delegation members who represent various African media organs. [passage omitted]

Al-Ansari said in reply to a question on Arab relations, that the president said that there are always some differences in the Arab world, but Arabs have the ability to overcome them and reopen their hearts to each other. They also have the ability to open new pages for constructive relations. [passage omitted]

Al-Ansari added that President Mubarak expressed the hope that the coming stage will witness better Arab relations and a clarification of the Arab situation as a whole so that we can all work toward construction and development. The president said that Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Jordan's King Husayn telephoned him separately and that the talks with the two leaders were frank. Al-Ansari said that President Mubarak is eager to establish a strong and sound Arab situation that would go forward by leaps and bounds.

On the peace efforts in the region, President Mubarak said that efforts and moves are continuing; if Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir's positions become flexible, matters will move quickly toward peace. The president added that Egypt is waiting for this flexibility from Shamir and that the Americans have not abandoned the initiative or the efforts related to it and are continuing to move in that direction.

Replying to questions from Moroccan journalists about Western Sahara and the plebiscite slated to be held there, President Mubarak said: We support the plebiscite because this is a UN resolution.

On the situation in Sudan and Somalia, President Mubarak said that Egypt always supports Sudan and Somalia and has made every effort with former Somali President Siad Barre to spare his country many problems; regrettably, the response was not enough to spare Somali from events. He added that Egypt is playing a central role in getting the Somali forces together so as to reach a reconciliation and stability.

On Sudan, President Mubarak said that Egypt is helping and backing the Sudanese people and does not interfere in that country's internal affairs.

On the future of the Arab Cooperation Council [ACC], al-Ansari cited President Mubarak as saying that ACC acitivities are frozen right now. The president added: Iraq did not inform the ACC that it would invade Kuwait. If it had, we would have opposed it before the invasion because we support principles and are against any invasion or occupation.

Tunisia

Reportage on Ennahdha 'Conspiracy', Aftermath

Hundreds Said Arrested

LD2305154791 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 0600 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Three hundred people, including one hundred soldiers, have been arrested in Tunisia. They are accused of having hatched a plot against the government. During a press conference yesterday, Tunisian Interior Minister Abdallah Kallel stated that all the people arrested are members of the fundamentalist movement Ennahda.

Several arrests have been made during the past weeks, and they are not finished yet. Research continues in order to dismantle the entire network involved in the plot. In any case, among the soldiers involved, there are officers belonging to the various armies with the rank of major. The Tunisian authorities are reported to have learned about this plot that has been going on since 1989.

EL-WATAN, our national daily, quoting its special envoy in Tunis, related an unofficial story, according to which the Tunisian president escaped a car bomb attack two weeks ago. This attack is reported to have caused the death of four guards of the presidential (?palace).

Ennahdha Leader on Warrants

LD2305172991 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 23 May 91

[Interview with Rached Ghannouchi, leader of the Tunisian Ennahdha fundamentalist organization, by correspondent Kamel Djaider; place and date not given; interview in Arabic fading to French translation—recorded]

[Text] [Ghannouchi] Ben Ali knows better than anyone what is going on in the Army. Our organization is a civilian one acting within the framework of civilian life. Since the Army is not an isolated island, just like the rest of the country, just like the rest of the population. We certainly have supporters inside the Army, but we do not have militants as such inside the Army. Our ways to change things are civilian, peaceful ones and not military, putschist ones. We always were against a putsch, against a military coup. We note that these unending purges inside the Army—which brought about a purge of hundreds of our best leading military people—show that there is a confidence crisis between the Ben Ali regime and its Army. It is a regime that does not rest on the Army, on the defense of the motherland, but it is a regime that rests on the police, on the Interior Ministry. In this regime, the Army feels sidelined.

[Djaider] An arrest warrant for you was issued; this is the first time this has happened. How do you feel? Do you feel threatened this morning?

[Ghannouchi] No, not at all, I do not feel threatened. I am being judged for the third time in 10 years but it is the first time that an international arrest warrant has been issued for me and for the political leaders of our movement. This shows that this regime is not a political regime that acts against its opponents in a political manner, but that this is a purely police regime that uses only police methods. It is a regime that uses justice, what is commonly called justice, to finish its political opponents.

[Djaider] Now that there is this international arrest warrant out for you, what are you going to do?

[Ghannouchi] I believe that there is still liberty in the world, that there are still human rights in this world, and I am glad that the world has not evolved in the direction of the Ben Ali regime which has issued this arrest warrant for me.

[Djaider] The Tunisian interior minister said yesterday that he found understanding and cooperation, these are the words he used, on the part of French and Algerian authorities concerning you. What does that mean? Are you afraid of problems in France or possibly in Algeria tomorrow?

[Ghannouchi] No, I do not fear any difficulties and I do not believe Ben Ali's accusations. I am confident that both in France and in Algeria there are still human rights, there is still respect for liberty.

[Djaider] Did you experience any problems coming from the French Interior Ministry? Are you in any way afraid of this international arrest warrant today?

[Ghannouchi] No, not at all.

[Djaider] Now a question concerning your political strategy. A great deal has been said about the violence from Ennahdha, the strategy of violence, the strategy of penetration of your organization in the main state structures, in the Army, in the main strategic sectors with a view to seize power.

[Ghannouchi] No, our strategy has not changed, its aim is still to impose freedom, democracy, human rights for all Tunisians and this strategy rests on popular means, political means to impose these freedoms. The designation of our plan is: Freedom for all. The codename of Ben Ali's plan being implemented now is: The final solution.

[Djaider] The interior minister gave very precise details about your organization's structure, it even seems that all the leaders of your movement were arrested yesterday with the exception of those now abroad, such as yourself. Can we say that we witnessed the dismantling of your whole organization?

[Ghannouchi] This is the wording used everywhere and at all times by all dictators: They believe that by using police means they can definitely get rid of their rivals. Yet these rivals have always managed to reappear and to turn the plans of these dictators completely upside down. I note in this case that there weren't only 300 people arrested but more than 3,000, and those sought by the police number more than 10,000. In the past six months, eight of our militants were shot dead, and torture is systematically applied to those arrested. Tunisia has become a huge place for hunting people, for torture, for assassinations. I note here that one often mentioned infiltration of the ministries of sovereignty by our organization and I am surprised by these accusations, one speaks of our organization as if it comes from the planet Mars or from foreign countries. We are the sons of the people and it is normal that as a mass organization we are present everywhere: where there is a Tunisian he might become a member of our organization or a supporter.

Ben Ali Accused of Lying

LD2305225391 Paris Radio France International in French 1830 GMT 23 May 91

[Excerpt] Rached Ghannouchi, leader of the Tunisian [Ennahdha] fundamentalist movement, has denied being implicated in the plot revealed yesterday by the authorities. It is a tissue of lies, he said earlier on the RFI [Radio France International]. Here he is talking to Kamel Djaider. His words have been translated into French:

[Begin recording] [Ghannouchi, in Arabic, with voice-over French translation] This is a big lie and not the first one by Ben Ali. Ben Ali, who has already falsified the will of an entire people, lied about the results of the elections in April 1989. He has accustomed us to this type of lie. He promised the people democracy when he took power on 7 November, but all the Tunisian people have seen is a police regime even more dictatorial than the previous one. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Foreign Envoys Updated

LD2305220191 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Noureddine Mejdoub, secretary of state at the foreign minister's office, today received two groups of ambassadors accredited in Tunis. The first included ambassadors of the EEC, and the second included ambassadors of Africa, Asia, America, and Europe—those who are not EEC members. The conversation between the secretary of state and his guests dealt with the conspiracy uncovered by Tunisian authorities and engineered by the so-called Ennahdha movement in order to impose a religious state in Tunisia.

Hamadi Khouini, secretary of state at the foreign minister's office in charge of Arab Maghreb Union affairs, received the heads of the Arab diplomatic missions in Tunis at the Foreign Ministry. The conversation centered around the conspiracy uncovered by the Tunisian authorities and plotted by the so-called Ennahdha movement, aimed at seizing power and setting up a dark and grievous regime.

Communist Party Leader on 'Plot'

LD2405105291 Paris Radio France International in French 0530 GMT 24 May 91

[Text] Regarding that business—that is, the plot allegedly fomented by the Tunisian fundamentalists of the Ennahda movement—the party's leader Rachid Ghannouchi, who is in self-imposed exile, speaking on this station yesterday denied any participation in the plot.

Tunisian political circles are not at all convinced. The Popular Unity Party believes there is no doubt as to the fundamentalists' intentions. Mohamed Harmel, general secretary of the Tunisian Communist Party, takes the same stand:

[Begin recording] [Harmel] All elements of preparation are clearly visible, in particular the participation of army elements. Perhaps they had not yet decided the date, the form, or the practical means, but officers who meet in secrecy in Tunisia do not do so to discuss the sex of angels or talk about economics.

[Correspondent Rida Boughezi] But Rachid Ghannouchi denied the involvement of his movement in the plot. What do you think?

[Harmel] We find it all the easier to contest Ghannouchi's stand because we defended him when he was the object of repression, he and his members. We showed understanding regarding their movement, despite the profound differences between us as to the use of religion in politics. Therefore, we feel easy about saying that his position is indefensible. There is double talk there. [end recording]

Workers Union Condemns Attempt

LD2305222691 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] The Tunisian General Labor Federation [UGTT] Executive Council met today under the chairmanship of its Secretary General Ismail Sahbani.

It issued a statement which noted that it reviewed the political situation in the country in the light of what was revealed at the interior minister's news conference yesterday about the conspiracy engineered by the so-called Ennahdha movement to seize power by military coup.

The UGTT Executive Council's statement condemned the trend toward the use of military coups and the use of the security and defense organs to decide political issues which confront the country and society—a matter that contradicts the principles of democratic political action and is considered to be a danger to the country's institutions and the future of democracy.

The UGTT affirmed the need for civilian society to shoulder its historic responsibilities in this situation headed by Tunisian workers and their UGTT. It also affirmed the need to deepen the democratic process and to push it forward still further so that all the elements of the civilian society defend civil institutions and stand up to all attempts to destroy them or marginalize their role in defending the homeland's independence and its development.

The UGTT Executive Council called for speedy action to uncover all the foreign quarters and forces which have been proved to be involved in the coup attempt, and to reveal who stands behind them, whatever their position.

French Foreign Minister Arrives in Tunis

LD2305193791 Paris Radio France International in French 1830 GMT 23 May 91

[Excerpt] The French minister of foreign affairs arrived a short while ago in Tunis. Roland Dumas will be received tomorrow morning by President Ben Ali, after which the French foreign minister will be going to Algeria. [passage omitted]

Western Sahara

SDAR President on UN-Sponsored Referendum

LD1205113191 Algiers APS in Arabic 0900 GMT 12 May 91

[Text] Bir Lahloui, 12 May (APS)—A statement issued by the SDAR [Saharan Democratic Arab Republic] Information Ministry notes that Mohamed Abdelaziz, SDAR president and secretary general of the Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro], made a speech during a meeting of the SDAR diplomatic corps on Polisario's 18th anniversary.

The SDAR president noted that celebrating this date coincides with the great victory the Sahraoui people have scored and the steady international support for their inalienable right to self-determination and independence per UNSC resolution 690, which called for a free, comprehensive, and organized referendum under UN supervision allowing the Sahraoui people to choose their future, free from any military or administrative pressure.

The SDAR ministry statement said that Mohamed Abdelaziz reaffirmed the Polisario's complete readiness to cooperate with the United Nations and its secretary general and the OAU to ensure the free and democratic expression of the Sahraoui choice.

On this occasion, the SDAR president expressed the gratitude of the Sahraoui people and Polisario to all the countries, organizations, parties, and personalities throughout the world for their support for the cause of the Sahraoui people.

On the other hand, he stressed to the international community, headed by the United Nations and the OAU, that these efforts will be crowned with success as long as the matter concerns countries that respect the choice of the Sahraoui people and the supremacy of the voice of peace and justice over the logic of war and imperialism.

In conclusion, President Mohamad Abdelaziz made an urgent appeal to all Sahraoui people, wherever they may be, to coordinate efforts to gather the fruits of their long struggle for the Sahraoui cause.

Bahrain

Foreign Minister, Iranian Official Discuss Ties

JN2305135291 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1125 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Manama, 23 May (WAKH)—Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah has received a message from Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati on current developments in the region and friendly bilateral realtions.

The message was delivered by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister 'Ali Mohammed Besharati during their meeting here this morning.

During the meeting, they discussed relations between Bahrain and the Islamic Republic of Iran and prospects for cooperation in all fields.

They also discussed the situation in the Gulf after the end of the Gulf crisis and the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation, and the security arrangements in this vital region of the world.

The meeting was attended by 'Ali Ibrahim al-Mahrus, director of the Political Department at the Foreign Ministry; Mostafa Haeri, director general of Gulf affairs at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, and Javad Torkabadi, the Iranian ambassador to Bahrain.

The Iranian official arrived in Bahrain last night on a three-day visit to Bahrain as part of a tour of the region's states.

UN Iraqi Weapons Destruction Team in Bahrain

JN2305172191 Manama WAKH in English 1600 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Manama, May 23 (GNA)—A United Nations team set up to ensure that Iraq destroys its weapons of mass destruction, is to be based in Bahrain.

A four-member UN delegation has just left Bahrain after holding talks with Foreign Ministry officials.

The delegation which included John F Scott, Alastair Livingston and Demetrios Tsouros from the UN and Mary Ryan, ambassador at the US State Department, were in Bahrain to conduct an initial site survey to set up a field office before leaving for Kuwait and Iraq .

"Another group will visit Bahrain within two weeks to finalize the structure and venue of the office," said Bahrain-based UN Information Centre director Dr 'Abdallah Akruk.

"We hope the office will accommodate at least 50 people, at any given time , who will visit Iraq on a rotation bases," the Bahraini daily 'GULF DAILY NEWS' quoted Dr Akruk as saying.

They will include technical experts serving as inspectors, disposal teams and field support officers.

Dr Akruk said their operations were expected to last for a minimum of six months.

The UN special commission overseeing the task, with ambassador Rolf Ekeus from Sweden as executive chairman and Dr Robert Gallucci from the United States as deputy executive chairman, has been set up under UN Security Council Resolution 687.

Dr Akruk said the commission would carry out immediate on-site inspection of Iraq's biological, chemical and missile capabilities.

Kuwait

Cabinet Minister Issues Statement on Trials

LD2305190791 (Clandestine) Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Dari Abdallah al-Uthman, minister of state for cabinet affairs, has stressed the anxiousness of the State of Kuwait to uphold the rule of law and its absolute belief in human rights irrespective of nationality, race, or creed. In a press statement published in London today, al-Uthman, talking about the current trials in Kuwait, said that the measures taken on the defendants took into account their rights to defend themselves in accordance with the law on penal procedures and prosecutions. He added that everything was also based on the law to which Kuwait is committed and which is confirmed by the Constitution and the observed laws, namely that the accused is innocent until proven guilty. He went on to say that Kuwait had stressed its adherence to this rule even in all the trials that took place prior to the tyrannical Iraqi occupation. This, he said, earned Kuwait the respect of the human rights organizations and bodies.

Here follows the full text of the news statement made by Dari al-Uthman, minister of state for cabinet affairs, in response to reports carried by the media on government and press reactions to the trials taking place in Kuwait in which a number of defendents are charged with collaborating with the treacherous Iraqi occupier:

The State of Kuwait stresses its anxiousness to uphold the rule of law and its absolute belief in human rights, irrespective of nationality, race, or creed. From this premise, all the measures announced to deal with the defendents took into account the rights of defense stipulated by the law on penal procedures and prosecutions. The rule to which Kuwait is committed, which is confirmed by the Constitution and the laws, is that the accused is innocent until proven guilty. Kuwait has stressed its adherence to this rule in all the trials prior to the tyrannical Iraqi occupation. Kuwait's adherence to this rule earned it the respect of human rights institutions and organizations.

The trials are currently taking place in the open within the framework of the law and all the basic guarantees are provided to the defendants and nobody can dispute the judgement passed by the judge.

The Kuwaiti minister of state for cabinet affairs said that some tendentious media have tried to cause confusion and obliterate the truth by not referring to the acquittals which were pronounced in favor of some defendants. Instead, they concentrated only on the guilty verdicts in an effort to sow confusion and suspicion about their fairness. He added that the State of Kuwait was subjected to the tyrannical Iraqi occupation, during which the occupier committed against the peaceful people of Kuwait the worst kinds of torture and human rights violations. Despite the bitterness felt by the Kuwaiti people as a result of this odious occupation, it never abandoned its tolerant Shar'iah, its principles, its ideals, and its laws, which all agree that every crime and every punishment must be dealt with by the law and that two wrongs do not make a right.

While stressing its identity of position on the issues raised by some friends regarding the importance of providing the basic guarantees to the defendants involved in the cases before the courts, Kuwait expresses its gratitude and consideration for their support for Kuwait and its legitimate right to bring any defendant before a fair Kuwaiti judiciary system. He concluded his statement by insisting on the fact that Kuwait, which has become an example of international cooperation in the defense of legality, right, and justice, will also remain a haven of security and safety to all the different nationalities who live on its soil.

Saudi Arabia

'Official Source' Statement on Iranian Pilgrims

LD2405092691 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] An official source has made the following statement to SPA:

There has been much talk lately in news agency and radio reports about the Iranian pilgrims arriving in the Kingdom to perform this year's pilgrimage. The fact is, that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has reached agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran on this matter on clear and firm principles. An agreement was signed between the two countries, and Saudi Arabia confirms its commitment to this. It also confirms its commitment to the resolutions of the 17th conference of Islamic Conference Organization foreign ministers held in 1987 in Amman, the capital of Jordan, concerning arrangements for those arriving in the holy places to perform the pilgrimage. The Kingdom spares no effort to allow the guests of God to perform the rites of their pilgrimage in ease, tranquility, calm, and peace in accordance with the Almighty's saying: Let there be no obscenity, nor wickedness, nor wrangling in the hajj.

Yemen

Salih Receives 'Arafat, Supports Peace Efforts

JN2305134491 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the Presidential Council, and 'Ali Salim al-Bid, vice chairman of the Presidential Council, today received brother struggler Yasir 'Arafat, president of the State of Palestine and chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, who participated in our people's celebrations on the first anniversary of the unity and establishment of the Republic of Yemen.

He expressed the congratulations of the leadership of the Palestinian revolution and the Palestinian people to the brother president, the vice chairman, the Yemeni leadership and people, on this immortal occasion in the life of our people and the history of our Arab nation.

During the meeting, they also exchanged views on developments in the Arab arena, primarily the Palestinian situation and the international efforts under way to establish peace in the region.

The brother president said our country will continue to support the struggle of the Palestinian people and all efforts that contribute to resolving the Palestine question on a just basis and under the international umbrella, so as to ensure to the Palestinian people the establishment of their independent state on their national soil under the leadership of their sole, legitimate representative, the PLO.

Ramadan Remarks on 30-State Failed 'Aggression'

JN2405055891 Baghdad INA in Arabic
2000 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Sanaa, 23 May (INA)—Taha Yasin Ramadan, Revolution Command Council member and vice president, has stressed that the 30- state aggression against Iraq has failed to achieve its objectives of spreading frustration and despair among the Arab masses.

In a meeting with a number of Arab journalists in Yemen, the vice president said the Arab masses will double their resistance against all formulas of conspiracy and aggression and their defense of Arab rights. Ramadan referred to the high morale in building Iraq and its people's challenge to the enemies to rebuild what was destroyed in record time, which came as a surprise to the aggressors. This, he said, was done through purely Iraqi efforts against what the conspirators had planned to do to keep these efforts from working.

Ramadan stressed that the "Mother of Battles" was practical proof of the Arab masses' position toward their cause and of their support for Iraq in resisting the aggression. Ramadan noted that the "Mother of Battles" is not [tense as received] a military battle only, but also a political and economic battle which Iraq has led against more than 30 states, led by the United States and its allies, with all the power they have.

He pointed out that the U.S.-Zionist-Atlantic aggression against Iraq is still going on through the continued and unprecedented economic blockade imposed on Iraq by the United States, Britain, and France—as well as their allies, slaves, and agents—with the use of international laws, the Security Council, and international legitimacy.

The vice president stressed that Arab unity can be achieved through the Arab masses, which are becoming more aware of, and cling stronger to their pan-Arab responsibility. This, he added, constitutes the beginning of the Arabs' victory.

'Severe' Security Measures in al-Nayaf, Karbala'

LD2305155391 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1445 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Following the declaration of a public day of mourning by the leader of the Islamic revolution, the Iraqi regime introduced severe security measures in the cities of Karbala' and al-Nayaf, especially around the holy shrines of Imam Husayn and Hazrat-e 'Ali, peace be upon them. According to an IRNA report, Iraqi military forces were deployed around the holy shrines, preventing people from entering. According to available despatches, Iraqi Muslims in al- Nasaf and Karbala' staged mourning ceremonies in different parts of those cities today.

Turkish Party Leader Ecevit Begins Visit

Jasim, Ecevit Discuss Relations

JN2305194291 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1920 May 23 May 91

[Text] Baghdad, 23 May (INA)—Latif Nusayyif Jasim, member of the Regional Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and official in charge of the Foreign Relations Office in the Ba'th Regional Command, today met with Bulent Ecevit, leader of the Democratic Left Party and former Turkish prime minister. During the meeting, they discussed relations between the two parties and ways to promote them.

Bulent Ecevit arrived in Baghdad today on a visit of several days to Iraq.

Ecevit Criticizes Bush Statements

JN2405112991 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1110 GMT 24 May 91

[Text] Baghdad, 24 May (INA)—Bulent Ecevit, leader of the Turkish Democratic Left Party, has criticized statements made by U.S. President George Bush and his Defense Secretary Cheney on U.S. troops staying in northern Iraq indefinitely. The Turkish politician said those statements are not based on the UN Security Council resolutions or on any legal bases.

The former Turkish prime minister added in statements to INA that the United States of America cannot make itself a replacement to the UN Security Council because it lacks the legal grounds to do so.

Ecevit, currently on visit to Iraq, said he will discuss with the officials the developments in the region away from foreign states' interference.

Hammadi Calls For State Control of Cereal Crops

JN2305153691 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1425 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Baghdad, 23 May (INA)—Prime Minister Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi has called for instituting controls to prevent waste of agricultural crops, the sale of which the Council of Ministers has decided should be restricted to the state to avoid waste and dissipation in harvesting and marketing the crops in the country.

Chairing a meeting for governors and governorate officials, Dr. Hammadi said that the top priorities in the current stage require exemplary performance and minute attention to detail in the practical measures to be used in the harvest and marketing campaign to achieve the best results in self-sufficiency in the current cereals season in the country.

Dr. Hammadi urged those supervising the harvest campaign to obtain all the requirements for making the campaign a success. He also called for practical measures

to ensure that on-site supervision by the state and party agencies is conducted during the campaign.

The prime minister said that the country will continue to provide the necessary facilities and encourage producers by providing them with seeds at subsidized prices and also by purchasing their crops at premium prices.

SAIRI Rejects UN Police Force Plan

LD2005192591 Tehran IRNA in English 1749 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Tehran, May 20, IRNA—An Iraqi opposition group here Monday rejected a U.N.-Iraqi agreement for deployment of U.N. police forces in southern and northern Iraq as falling short of guaranteeing the safety of homecoming Iraqi refugees.

"The U.N. police force lacks actual power to encounter the crimes being committed by Saddam (Husayn) against homecoming Iraqi refugees," a spokesman for the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI) told IRNA.

The SAIRI spokesman said the safe havens to be set up for Iraqi refugees under the auspices of the United Nations should ensure the safety of the refugees.

He also expressed doubt over the ability of U.N. forces to function as a deterrent to the anti-human rights activities of the Saddam regime because he said their mission was restricted to reporting to the international body.

Government Forces Said To Attack Karbala'

NC2305172691 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1430 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Continuing its destructive and repressive policy against our people and sanctities in an attempt to destroy our victorious popular revolution, the defeated regime has carried out its largest ever invasion of the two holy cities of Karbala' and al-Najaf.

A special source told our radio that the two cities came under fierce artillery and air bombardment before the (?regime's) forces, supported by armored vehicles, and entered them three days ago. He said that, in both cities, he saw military vehicles taking a large number of detained young men to unknown locations and that regime troops raided certain specified houses and arrested everyone inside.

In Karbala', some young men were dragged through the city streets behind military vehicles as punishment for resisting the regime's troops when they entered the holy city.

The walls of al-Husayni [Shiite holy shrine] hall were splattered with blood following a random attack by the regime's armed henchmen on a group of defenseless visitors who had been chanting slogans against the lowly criminal Saddam.

This campaign against the holy cities coincides with one against our kinfolk in the southern governorates, in yet another failed attempt by the regime to quell our triumphant revolution.

Government Said Preparing Military Attack

NC2305184991 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Opposition in Arabic 1500 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] The defeated tyrant's regime is preparing to carry out a wide-scale military operation in the al-Ahwar area. It has dubbed this operation al-Amthal, the same name it used for its campaign against the Kurds after its eight-year-long war with Iran. In that campaign, the regime used chemical weapons and annihilated thousands of Kurdish citizens.

The regime is now regrouping thousands of its remaining forces to tighten the blockade on the area and prevent food supplies from entering, despite the fact that this is a violation of Security Council Resolution 688.

The Iraqi opposition calls on all governments and parliaments to act to force the tyrant's regime to comply with Security Council Resolution 688. The opposition also calls on all international organizations and governments to act to protect the innocent Iraqi citizens in the area from the threat of mass murder.

The Iraqi opposition also calls on the United Nations to send a team to visit the area. It urges foreign journalists to visit the area to exert pressure on the tyrant's regime.

The opposition appeals to Iraqi communities to stage demonstrations and sit-ins outside parliaments and in public squares in the countries where they reside to express their solidarity with their brothers in Iraq and their rejection of the tyrant's regime and to call on the world countries and peoples to send humanitarian aid to the al-Ahwar area, where hundreds of thousands of our innocent citizens are receiving no food supplies.

Regret Expressed Over Content of Baker Remarks

TA2405045291 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 24 May 91

[Excerpts] Officials in Jerusalem have expressed regret that the United States did not see fit to name the intransigence of the Arab countries as the main obstacle to peace. Official circles, which asked not to be named, said the latest statements from Washington cast doubt on America's future role as an honest broker. Jack Katzenell reports:

[Begin Katznell recording] [passage omitted] The Foreign Ministry, in an official statement, acknowledged that there are differences between Israel and the United States over the settlement issue, but added it was a pity that Washington had not mentioned the intransigence of the Arab countries as the obstacle to peace.

Speaking not for attribution, official circles in Jerusalem said the latest statements of Baker and Bush have revived Prime Minister Shamir's apprehensions about America's intentions, apprehensions which had to a large extent been dispelled during the talks with Secretary Baker. From now on, there would be growing support for the view of Defense Minister Moshe Arens that Israel should return to its own peace initiative of May 1989, an initiative which is not dependent on U.S. mediation. [end recording]

Pazner Says Disagreement With U.S. 'Nothing New'

TA2305170591 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 23 May 91

[Telephone interview with Prime Minister's media adviser Avi Pazner by Karmit Gay—live]

[Text] [Gay] Good evening, prime minister's adviser Avi Pazner.

[Pazner] A very good evening to you.

[Gay] The U.S. secretary of state and President have said that settlements are a bad thing, while we replied that they are a good thing unconnected to the political process. The question is: What happens now? Are we going to agree to disagree, as friends do, or perhaps we cannot really afford such disagreements with the U.S. Administration?

[Pazner] The truth is that the issue of settlements has long been a subject of disagreement between us and the U.S. Administration—and not just this one. We have disagreed with every administration since the Six-Day War on this issue. Various U.S. Administrations have defined settlement as an obstacle to peace, and some administrations went so far as to say that our settlement drive is illegal. Thus, while the present administration did not characterize the issue in this way, the disagreement between us and the United States contains nothing new. I dare predict that these disagreements will exist in the future, too, because we repudiate the theory that settlement constitutes an obstacle to peace. I am saying this because we are now talking about an entirely different matter: about organizing an encounter between us and the Arab countries, and between us and the Palestinians. This matter has nothing to do with the issue of settlement.

[Gay] This is what we are saying. They, however, are saying something else.

[Pazner] Look, Secretary Baker spent some time here, and he held lengthy talks with the prime minister, the foreign minister, the defense minister. According to his own testimony, he was pleased when he left Israel; he himself said that he was pleased with the progress Israel had made. And indeed, Israel had discussed ways of organizing a meeting between us and the Arab countries, in order to start negotiations.

[Gay] But still, summing up his tour, he pointed an accusing finger at us.

[Pazner] No, no, absolutely not true. And furthermore, in his remarks today, President Bush has considerably mitigated Baker's observation by saying that there has been progress on the part of Israel. Also, in his testimony at the Congress yesterday, Baker did not point a general accusing finger at us; he did so only with regard to the one specific problem of settlements. He reiterated the U.S. position which is, naturally, unacceptable to us. Again, there is nothing new in this, and I believe we will all have to continue living with this difference of opinion.

[Gay] Thank you very much, Avi Pazner, the prime minister's adviser.

[Pazner] You are welcome.

Olmert Says Baker Wants 1967 Borders Used

TA2305152891 Tel Aviv Educational Television Network in Hebrew 1400 GMT 23 May 91

[Interview with Health Minister Ehud Olmert by Dan Margalit in the Tel Aviv studio—live]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Margalit] Minister Olmert, James Baker said yesterday, among other things, that he had proposed that Israel stop the settlement drive while Arabs agreed to a state of nonbelligerency [preceding three words in English]. He said that neither of the sides had responded to his proposal. Do you believe the Israeli Government should provide an affirmative reply to this proposal? Could we not give up a little on the settlement issue, which would help us attain a situation of semi-peace?

[Olmert] I do not believe such a proposal stands any chance whatsoever of obtaining an affirmative reply from the main parties in conflict with us. Therefore, if Israel does provide an answer, it will be committing itself, or rather, setting a price for its concession, which will remain fruitless, as the process itself has been in the past month.

[Margalit] But this is what somewhere some Arab ministers are saying right now: Why should we commit ourselves as long as Israel has not replied?

[Olmert] It is a fact that Syria has said no to much less binding issues and has, in addition, presented preposterous, absurd demands. If I may say so, this whole issue of settlements has been presented in a totally disproportionate manner. We could argue about the issue. For instance, Baker has said that each time he came here, another settlement was being set up. We could hold a legitimate debate on the timing, on whether settlements should be set up on the very day of his arrival, or a day earlier, or two weeks later.

This, however, is not the point. It should be understood that Baker's objection to settlement was not prompted by the timing, or by his innate or ideological objection to the act of settlement. What Baker wants is to lead Israel back to the 1967 borders, or to borders similar to those of 1967, in one way or another. Therefore, his objection to settlements comprises a much more substantive position, from our viewpoint. It is from this angle that the issue should be viewed. We should stop regarding it as an annoyance.

[Margalit] Let us look at the matter from their point of view. They have no right to tell us what to do, to order us around, or so forth; all this has been said before. The problem is that if they attach such vast significance to continued settlement, would it not be to our own advantage to temporarily give it up in order to ease tensions in our relations with the United States, and in order to show that the Arabs, and not Israel, are the obstacle to peace?

[Olmert] This problem could be debated had it been dissociated from the U.S. position as it was presented both by Baker and the President in the past two days through their observation that settlements are an obstacle for peace. The moment a position is presented in such a manner the debate can no longer be held on a tactical basis, and it is no longer possible to say: Let us wait two or three weeks, or let us wait awhile, in order to create a more favorable atmosphere.

[Margalit] Why not? This could expose the positions of the others. There is no other way to expose the Arabs as the obstacle to peace.

[Olmert] First of all, I believe it is possible. It is a fact that despite the issue of settlements—on which we and the Americans have disagreed since 1967, and which are not an invention of one of the governments or one of the ministers who is suddenly blamed for the whole thing....

[Margalit, interrupting] It is true, but we now have a controversy.

[Olmert] This controversy has always existed between us and the Americans. What stalls the process is the fact that the Arab countries refuse to accept the American proposals in other fields. They refuse to provide any basis whatsoever that would allow the process to begin and some kind of reasonable negotiations to be launched.

In fact, this position on settlements reflects a traditional Arab ultimatum which says that an Israeli guarantee to withdraw is the condition for negotiations. Obviously, by establishing settlements, we imply that we oppose this condition. Underlying the American demand is a desire to hear Israel say—though in different words, perhaps—that it is ready to withdraw from the territories. In my opinion, this demand is unjustified at this juncture.

[Margalit] Minister Olmert, thank you very much.

[Olmert] Thank you very much.

Moda'i Says Aid Request Hard if U.S. Angered

TA2405081291 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 24 May 91 pp 1, 4

[Report by Avi Temkin]

[Excerpt] "It is very difficult to ask for U.S. aid while the settlement issue angers them," Finance Minister Yitzhaq Moda'i said yesterday in a special interview with 'AL HAMISHMAR. Still, the minister pointed out that he is convinced that there should not be any link between settlements and aid for immigrant absorption. "The fact is that the Americans gave us economic aid annually despite the settlements, except that this time they are trying to grab us by the throat," he said.

Moda'i said that he is a full partner to the government's settlement policy even if it harms the economy to a certain extent. He will not advise the government to change its policy or the order of priorities over the settlement issue, since this has nothing to do with the policy on immigrant absorption. "The Americans must know that the sums spent on settlements out of the aid funds are negligible, but there might be those who are looking for excuses," he said.

Moda'i pointed out that without large-scale foreign aid and external financing at levels planned by the Treasury, some $10 billion over five years, the standard of living drops significantly and even will lead to a decline in immigration. The minister estimated that even if we receive the necessary aid, two to three years will pass before the employment figure stabilizes at a reasonable level and the economy begins to absorb workers at its own pace. [passage omitted]

Editorial Says 'Hard Times Lie Ahead'

TA2305084991 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 23 May 91 p 2

[Editorial: "Now It Is Serious"]

[Text] It is no coincidence that Baker chose to utter his harsh remarks denouncing the settlements in front of the

U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee. Committee Chairman David Obey is the most sympathetic home audience to be found for this purpose. Obey is the man who recently threatened to slash from the U.S. aid to Israel every dollar that is invested in settlements in the territories.

Furthermore, the Appropriations Committee provides the setting in which the Israeli Government's desire to go on establishing facts in the field and its wish to get vast sums of money for immigrant absorption meets up with the U.S. refusal to comply with these desires.

High-level U.S. sources have been warning us for months that we cannot have our cake and eat it, too. Baker has now gone one step beyond the financial threat. The settlements, so he said, might sabotage the entire peace process. Clearly, the one found guilty of sabotaging the process will be paid back in kind.

Baker's restraint on the issue, conspicuously evident in all his visits to Jerusalem, has now come to an end. He is retaliating from Washington for the "Revavas" and "Talmons" that were thrown his way while he was here. If this is one of the conclusions of the "reassessment" Baker and Bush are conducting these days, the Shamir government should realize that hard times lie ahead. It is no longer a question of procedural demands, which are part of the inevitable give-and-take. We are now getting closer to the demand that will either lead to the collapse of the process or the disbandment of the government or both. Baker the duck hunter set his sights on the settlements a long time ago. Yesterday he put his finger on the trigger.

Press Notes U.S. Pressure May Hurt Immigrants

TA2305142591 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 May 91 p B1

[Commentary by 'Aqiva Eldar: "Unjust and Unwise"]

[Excerpts] Were he not busy guiding tours of the West Bank and Golan Heights, Ari'el Sharon, chairman of the Ministerial Committee on Aliyah, would have been well advised to listen to what the "commando of informers" [term used by Sharon to describe delegation of left-wing Knesset members who recently visited the United States] had to say upon their return from a comprehensive tour of the United States. They would have informed him that David Obey, chairman of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, recently stated that the receipt of guarantees for a $10-billion loan would be accompanied by great difficulties. Obey said that, since the administration had reached the ceiling of the guarantees it can issue, aid to Israel would have to come at somebody else's expense. [passage omitted]

In the months that have elapsed since Foreign Minister David Levi entrusted Baker with a letter in order to get the guarantees for the $400-million loan, the Americans have learned that no commitment can stop their money from ending up in the territories. Sharon will yet prove to them that the $400 million were used to build apartment buildings for immigrants in Qiryat Gat and Rishon Leziyyon. After all, did he commit himself not to free most of the Housing and Construction Ministry's regular budget for the construction of Revavas and Talmons? Where is it written that the offer of improved mortgages to settlers in the territories means indirect orientation of immigrants to areas beyond the Green Line? This time Baker obviously will close this loophole and demand an explicit commitment to confine settlement activity to the dimensions that existed before the Soviet Union opened its gates to Jewish emigration. And what will happen then to the money from the guarantees? Will even one Likud minister or Knesset member agree to freeze the pace of settlement in return for money? Ehud Olmert and Roni Milo know very well with what glee Sharon would feast on their support—even if veiled—at the Likud Central Committee. The immigrants who rummage through garbage cans and the Jews who choose to stay in the Soviet Union will have no direct impact on the make-up of the next government and, in view of the Alignment's condition, not even the most shameful of disgraces will apparently stand in the way of the right wing.

Any psychology freshman will tell you that a punishment that is not directly linked to a deed or misdeed is ineffective. By depriving Israel of loans for the absorption of immigrants, the Americans will be punishing people who had nothing to do with the acts or their perpetrators. The immigrants did not elect this government, and most of them favor Karmi'el over Qarney Shomron. The Israeli man-on-the-street will not be affected, at least not in the short run, by the U.S. refusal to put the money at Israel's disposal. September, the time when Israel may submit its request for the guarantees, will be only two months away from an election year and the government will not want to provoke its long-standing electorate by imposing new taxes and calling on it to tighten its belt.

Thus, the United States would be punishing the Soviet Jews twice: the first time, when it closed its gates to them; and the second time, when it deprives them of the means to be assimilated in the only place that offers them refuge.

In this case, using the needs of immigrant absorption as a means of pressure is not only unjust, but also unwise. The United States can hardly expect the Israeli people to revolt against its government and replace it because when it refused to include a mute UN observer in a continuing and noncoercive regional conference it lost $10 billion. Most Israelis do not have the slightest idea about what this is all about. Economic pressure is a legitimate means to be used by a superpower to attain foreign policy objectives. These objectives, however, must be clear to the objects of the pressure so that they may make up their minds and know where to apply the pressure on their elected leaders. At best, money may extract from Shamir some marginal concessions about procedural matters. From Shamir's subjects, America must demand that in return for its money they make a

choice on the key question: Do they want a big, isolated, and poor Israel or a small and growing Israel that takes in immigrants?

Editorial Says U.S. Should Encourage Settlement

TA2405081091 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 24 May 91 p 4

[Editorial: "Another Baker Outburst"]

[Text] Secretary of State James Baker's statement to a congressional subcommittee on Wednesday, branding new Israeli settlements "the largest obstacle to peace," is disturbing on several levels. First, singling out Israel for blame is egregiously and transparently unjust. Baker has spent hours with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and achieved not an iota of a concession on anything. Syria still insists on a UN-sponsored international conference with coercive powers—a three-decade-old Soviet idea which even the Soviets have abandoned. Nor have Baker's many hours with the Saudi Arabians made them agree to bilateral, direct negotiations with Israel, which the Bush administration has called indispensable. That the Saudis have agreed to send an observer to the talks—as though they, like the Europeans, were neutral—only dramatizes their continued refusal to recognize Israel's legitimacy.

Jordan has so conditioned its participation on Syrian and PLO consent that its declared willingness to join a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation is bereft of meaning. Not a single Arab state has agreed to such confidence-building measures as the abolition of the political and economic boycott against Israel—a 40-year-old insult to the UN Charter.

Yet Baker mentioned none of these, or Syria's virtual annexation of Lebanon, or its use of the Saudi billions it received for its token participation in the anti-Saddam coalition to purchase sophisticated Soviet and North Korean weapons. Perhaps even more disappointing is that Baker does not consider the *opposition* to Jewish presence in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza to be an obstacle to peace. It is an unmistakable indication of the kind of state the Palestinian Arabs want in these areas, and it is hardly conducive to peace.

But singling out Israel is not only palpably unjust. It is hyperbole that does little to enhance American credibility. For even Israel's severest domestic and foreign critics, who oppose settlements and want to see an immediate freeze on all settlement activity, must find it difficult to believe that *only* Israel is to blame for Baker's current difficulties. The U.S. is trying to untangle one of the world's most intricate and elusive problems. Playing pin-the-tail-on-the-scapegoat is hardly the way to inspire confidence in its seriousness.

These outbursts against Israel—whether directed at its government in general or a particular minister or ambassador—have become a Baker trademark. One must assume they are staged for a purpose: the U.S. administration's reputation for cool-headed, pragmatic adherence to *realpolitik* militates against their being mere tantrums.

But it is well-nigh impossible to discern what that purpose may be. For regardless of what Baker says to congressional committees, he must know that, if Israel announces the immediate cessation of all settlement activity and removes the dozen trailers which have triggered his ire—absolutely nothing will have changed. Syria will continue to acquire Scuds and Migs, consolidate its grip on Lebanon, and refuse to attend direct talks with Israel; King Fahd will not sit with Shamir, nor will Mubarak, who will continue to boycott and bad-mouth him; the Palestinian death squads will continue their brutal, wanton murders, assuring that no free elections in the administered territories will be feasible; the Palestinians with whom Baker met in Jerusalem will insist on getting Arafat's approval for their every move; and King Husayn will do only what al-Asad and the PLO will permit him to do—he is not known as the Middle East's champion survivor for naught.

Those who believe a settlement freeze will at least dissuade Baker and the Arab regimes from blaming Israel will be sorely disappointed. As long as Israel is named the exclusive target, there will be no shortage of ammunition. The "largest obstacle to peace" can then be Israel's refusal to leave the Lebanon security zone; its continued building in East Jerusalem; its treatment of intifada detainees; its refusal to allow Palestinian refugees from Kuwait to enter Judaea and Samaria; or its refusal to accept "land for peace" as a precondition for negotiations.

If Baker is the shrewd negotiator he is reputed to be, and if direct negotiations are really his goal, he may want to try encouraging rather than condemning Israeli construction in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza. Nothing will persuade the Arabs to come to the negotiating table faster than the prospect of American-approved facts on the ground.

Ne'eman, Soviet Minister Discuss Joint Projects

TA2405100891 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 24 May 91

[Excerpt] The USSR atomic power and industry minister has suggested to Science Minister Yuval Ne'eman that the two countries jointly manufacture advanced products using Soviet iron and steel and Israeli know-how. Our correspondent Meron Tzur reports that the Soviet minister said that the USSR market is open to the Israelis for joint investments and marketing there and in other countries. [passage omitted]

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio at 0830 GMT on 24 May adds that in their meeting "the two ministers discussed joint projects of research, development, and export to the West, and the possibility of purchasing parts for a nuclear reactor."]

Poland's Walesa Finalizes State Visit 23 May

Ledworowski, Levi Sign Agreements

LD2305025791 Warsaw PAP in English 1643 GMT 22 May 91

[Text] Tel Aviv, May 22—Poland and Israel are to implement the most-favoured-nation clause in bilateral relations and settle accounts in free currencies under an economic agreement signed in Jerusalem today. The document also provides for setting up a mixed commission to consider details of economic cooperation between the two countries. Polish Minister for Foreign Economic Relations Dariusz Ledworowski and Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi also signed two other economic agreements, one on avoiding double taxation and another on mutal protection and promotion of investment. Two cultural agreements, signed by David Levi and Polish Ministers of Culture and of Education Marek Rostworowski and Robert Glebocki respectively, speak about setting up information and culture centres in both countries on the reciprocal basis and about cooperation in education.

Walesa Interviewed on Visit

LD2305192691 Warsaw TVP Television Network in Polish 1730 GMT 23 May 91

[Interview with Polish President Lech Walesa by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given, no video available—recorded]

[Text] [Correspondent] [words indistinct], Polish Television. Does your visit open up a new stage in Polish-Jewish relations?

[Walesa] (?this way) it is a question not only of Israel as a state but also of other Jews scattered around the world. I want to help the very difficult Polish reforms. On the outside I am doing everything so there is the best possible climate and best possible conditions. Whereas inside there has to be understanding, in Poland.

[Correspondent] Was your visit equally well received by the Palestinians and Arabs whom you also met? I think it was the mayor of Bethlehem and [word indistinct]....

[Walesa, interrupting] That's right, I am going to have even more meetings. We want relations with everyone, best relations.

[Correspondent] I would like to comment on a report that we receive here, that it was demanded of you that the PLO mission in Warsaw be liquidated.

[Walesa] No, that's not true. Somebody must have been spreading a joke here. But of course we are going to review many things, we have to pursue sensible policies.

Final Meetings

LD2305191991 Warsaw PAP in English 1626 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Tel Aviv, May 23—Polish President Lech Walesa accepted the proposal of Chairman of the World Federation of Polish Jews and Federation of Jewish Combatants Stefan Grajek to assume patronage of the work of the international committee preparing the commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto rising, to be held in April 1993.

Walesa expressed his readiness to assume patronage of the commemorations at a meeting with representatives of Polish Jews organisations held at the Museum of Diaspora in Tel Aviv on the fourth and final day of his official visit to Israel.

Shortly before noon Walesa was bidden farewell by Israeli President Chaim Herzog in Jerusalem. Next the Polish president and his party went by cars to Tel Aviv.

The polish visitor was greeted at the Museum of Diaspora by Mayor of Tel Aviv Shlomo Lahat and director of the museum Eli Eyal.

Also today President Walesa met with secretary general of Israeli trade unions Histadrut, Israel Keisar. The meeting, also attended by Secretary of State Janusz Ziolkowski, passed in a very cordial atmosphere. Keisar recalled that Histadrut was the first to invite Lech Walesa, the then Solidarity leader, to Israel as early as 1981.

At 16:00 hours this afternoon after a farewell ceremony at the Ben Gurion Airport at Luid near Tel Aviv the presidential plane left Israel for Warsaw.

Seen Off at Airport

TA2305143691 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Polish President Lech Walesa has ended his visit to Israel. He was seen off at the airport by Avraham Verdiger, deputy minister in charge of Jerusalem affairs, and by protocol chief Mordekhay Paltzur, Israel's former ambassador to Warsaw.

Our correspondent Dan Eshel notes that no ceremony was held at the airport, because the official farewell ceremony had been held at the presidential residence this morning.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1400 GMT on 23 May adds that "following a tour of the Diaspora Museum, Polish President Walesa announced that he had appealed to the UN secretary general on the revocation of the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism."]

Polish Spokesman Evaluates Visit

LD2305034991 Warsaw PAP in English 2233 GMT 22 May 91

[Text] Jerusalem, May 22—Polish President Lech Walesa invited his Israeli counterpart Hayim Herzog to pay a visit to Poland which will most likely take place in October, Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Jan Majewski told a press conference here today.

The Israeli Premier Yitzhaq Shamir has also been invited to pay a visit to Poland but the date of the visit has not been announced yet.

Polish Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski will pay a visit to Israel at the end of September.

Asked to comment on the results of President Lech Walesa's visit to Israel, presidential spokesman Andrzej Drzycimski said that "at present the two countries are facing each other as independent states which can take decisions on their own." He also stressed that the visit created a plane for normal relations between Poland and Israel.

Next, Jan Majewski recalled that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir said real relations between two independent countries—Poland and Israel—are just beginning to develop.

Polish officials also said the two sides had not discussed the issues of closing down the PLO representation office in Warsaw and transferring the Polish Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Peres Presents Absorption Plan to Immigrants

TA2305111291 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1000 GMT 23 May 91

[Report by 'Ezra Yanuv]

[Text] Labor Party Chairman Shim'on Peres toured immigrant centers and workplaces in Ashdod this morning. Representing the Labor Party in a meeting with new immigrants, Peres compared the government's failings with his own plan. Peres' plan provides for the absorption of 1 million immigrants within three years: a process that will be financed by six-year loans, which will be taken from veteran residents and given to the immigrants for a period of three years. The immigrants will start paying off the mortgage on their apartments from the third year of their residency, with the apartments serving as collateral for the banks. There will be a freeze on rental rates, new economic and employment opportunities will be created, and peace will be brought to a region in which tens of thousands of Soviet immigrant doctors, engineers, and scientists will work.

When we asked Mr. Peres about the situation on the Lebanese border, he replied:

[Begin recording] [Peres] The situation has changed; however, the change does not warrant any Israeli military intervention. Nevertheless, it calls for a high level of alert.

[Yanuv] Should the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] intervene in any way?

[Peres] No, I do not suggest we set out for war.

[Yanuv] Nevertheless, is there a Syrian threat?

[Peres] I think we should clarify Israel's red lines, and I am sure that the Syrians will learn to respect them in the future, just as they have in the past.

[Yanuv] On the other hand, Mr. Baker, in Washington, has said that the settlements are a danger to peace.

[Peres] This is nothing new. The fact that Baker is attacking the settlements is no reason for me to justify them. I see no need for these settlements today. I think that the settlements could hinder Israel's efforts to recruit the necessary means to cope with aliyah. In my opinion, these settlements today have no value whatsoever. The Negev is still a wasteland. Half the country is empty and waiting for the immigrants. Why should we create problems for ourselves? Why give Baker reason to attack us? [end recording]

As for his party, Mr. Peres stressed that he supports holding primaries for free and open elections. He added that those who are already eulogizing him are mere opportunists.

Chamber of Commerce Elections To Be Held

TA2305101691 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 May 91 p A7

[Report by Eytan Rabin, Yizhar Be'er, and ITIM]

[Text] The defense establishment, through the coordinator of government activities in the territories, has decided to permit the Palestinians to hold the first elections for the Chambers of Commerce in the territories in order to encourage economic investments by entrepreneurs.

Prior to the decision, discussions were held between the office for coordination of government activities in the territories and merchants in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Defense establishment sources said that there have been no elections for the Chambers of Commerce since 1970, when they were held but never implemented. Today, as part of the policy to encourage economic projects in the territories, which will provide employment for thousands of workers so that they will not have to go to work in Israel, the heads of the Civil Administration are encouraging the merchants to reinstitute the elections.

The first elections will be held in Hebron, with the authorization of Brigadier General Gadi Zohar, head of the West Bank Civil Administration. If they are conducted properly, elections will be held for the Chambers of Commerce in all the large towns.

It is assumed that the merchants will organize under a general Chamber of Commerce and will compete against activists from the PLO, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], and other movements in the territories.

In Gaza, the issue was discussed Tuesday between Brig. Gen. Arye Ramot, head of the Civil Administration there, and members of the Chamber of Commerce. The Civil Administration has lately also given permission to set up an industrial chamber under Muhammad al-Yazchi.

In Rafah, 12-year-old 'Id-Salim Sulayman Hijazi was killed yesterday, and his brother Riyad, 15, was seriously wounded when a suspicious object exploded. A security forces investigation discovered that the two were trying to plant a bomb in the Rafah area when it exploded in their hands. Riyad was taken to al-Nasir Hospital in Khan Yunus and later to al-Shifa' Hospital in Gaza, where he was hospitalized in intensive care.

Tahir Muhammad Tahir Danyal, 65, the former mukhtar of the township of al-Birah, was murdered by masked men. They fired at him yesterday afternoon in the center of al-Birah and fled. He died on route to the hospital in Jerusalem. Al-Birah residents claim that the murdered man had cooperated with the Israeli authorities.

Yesterday afternoon, four masked men armed with a revolver and cold steel weapons kidnapped Rabih 'Alluf, an inhabitant of the Jabalyah refugee camp. Residents of the area reported that the man was probably kidnapped on suspicion of cooperating with the authorities. His fate was still unknown late into the night.

Yesterday, there were light clashes between the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip. Palestinian sources reported several casualties in demonstrations in the refugee camps: three were wounded in Jabalyah, two in Khan Yunus, and two others in Gaza.

The Palestinians also reported clashes in Gaza's main street, mainly stone-throwing incidents. Military sources said that in recent weeks there has been a rise in stone throwing and violent activities in the strip.

Brig. Gen. Shmu'el Zucker, the IDF commander in the Gaza Strip, told BAMAHANE that the escalation should not be attributed to the deportation of the four Palestinians. An IDF spokesman said there was no curfew in the Gaza Strip yesterday and that life went on as usual. There were also no reports of special incidents or locals being hurt. Yesterday, between 20,000 and 25,000 laborers left the Gaza Strip for work in Israel.

The Civil Administration will hand Gaza Strip attorneys entry permits into Israel, following their complaints about difficulties surrounding the issue, it was decided in a meeting Monday between Gen. Ramot and their association. The permits will be valid for three months.

A 67-year-old resident of the village of Bayt Iksa was stabbed in the hand yesterday morning by what he claimed were four young Jews in the Ramot neighborhood of Jerusalem. The injured man told the police investigators that he had returned from work as a guard in Jerusalem and that when he reach the junction on the outskirts of Ramot, four Jewish youths provoked him and began to struggle with him.

He said that during the struggle, one of them stabbed him in the hand. The man was taken to Hadassah-Mount Scopus Hospital for treatment. His version is being checked.

Two firebombs ignited when hurled in the courtyard of the Civil Administration offices in Qalqilyah on Tuesday night. Firefighters who arrived at the scene put out the fire, and no casualties were reported. The same night, another two firebombs were thrown at an IDF patrol in Janin and exploded without causing any damage.

Palestinian sources reported that the soldiers emerged from their vehicle, broke into homes in the area, and detained four brothers as suspects in the attack. Suspects were rounded up in the village of Jalamah, in the northern part of the West Bank. Residents said Palestinian collaborators participated in the operation, and five residents were detained.

In the Tulkarm refugee camp and in Tulkarm city there was a protest strike yesterday in reaction to the demolition of the homes of two residents and the sealing up of another house the day before. Three people suspected of belonging to the Black Panthers and of participation in the murder and interrogation of collaborators lived in the houses.

During a melee that broke out Tuesday between supporters of Hamas and Fatah in the al-Fari'ah refugee camp in the Nabulus district, three residents—including a 13-year-old boy who was stabbed in the hand—were either slightly hurt or suffered medium wounds. The three were taken to al-Ittihad al-Nisa'i Hospital in Nabulus. The reason for the fight was the refusal of the Fatah members to fix a broken fence.

Number of Palestinian Murders Reported

TA2305161391 Jerusalem GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE in English 23 May 91

["Palestinians Killed by Palestinian:" GPO Headline]

[Text] During the past week, six Palestinians were murdered and three were injured in attacks carried out by Palestinians. In addition, a prisoner in the Ketziot detention facility was also murdered.

Since the beginning of the uprising until the 16.5.91, 414 Palestinians were murdered and 1,347 were injured in attacks carried out by Palestinian elements against Palestinian targets.

The above figure does not include: 38 prisoners who were murdered in detention facilities by Palestinian

inmates (25 of them at the Qezi'ot detention facility) and another five local residents who were killed in attacks directed at Jews.

Israel Accused of 'Sparking' Crisis With Lebanon

TA2305175291 Jerusalem AL-FAJR in Arabic 23 May 91 pp 1, 7

[Editorial: "Heating Up the Region Until Baker Returns for His Postponed Fifth Tour"]

[Text] At a time when U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has frankly stated that he will not be coming back on a fifth tour of the region any time soon, the Israeli Government has begun to raise the tone of its voice against Syria, using the treaty signed between Damascus and Beirut as a pretext.

Since Washington understands the Middle East psyche, it seems it will wash its hands of the region, for the time being, until things here begin to heat up again; then Washington will use the anticipated tension to launch another initiative or to proceed with Baker's postponed fifth tour.

This, however, should not mean that the Syrian position, which is committed to all international legitimacy, has been the reason for the failure of Baker's four tours. The fact is that the Israeli Government's intransigence and rejection of any serious role for the United Nations and the European countries in the proposed international or regional conference for a solution to the problem has been the direct cause of any failure of the current regional political peace process.

The Syrian position, on the basis of the observation and knowledge of all observers, does not differ basically—with respect to international legitimacy—from the positions of the other Arab parties concerned: Jordan, Egypt, and the PLO. Hence, these parties have resisted any attempt to undermine their unified position. First, the PLO announced that it would not agree to attend the proposed conference without Syria's participation. Then, Jordan and Egypt made the same statement. As for the Israeli Government, which until recently could not contemplate any sort of settlement without Syria, it now believes that such a settlement can be achieved in Syria's absence.

The Israeli Government, having rejected UN and European participation in that conference and having also rejected any binding commitment to the continuity of that conference, is now trying to cover up this rejection by sparking a crisis allegedly stemming from the Lebanese-Syrian treaty. By this means, the Israeli Government is seeking "to heat up" the situation in the region considerably, which as some of its own experts and officials are saying might even lead to war.

How will this affect international legitimacy? Will Washington indeed wait for the temperature to rise in the region? Most important of all is the unified Arab position. What shape will it be in and which direction will it take?

U.S. Peace Plan, Baker's Remarks Welcomed

JN2405095891 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 24 May 91 pp 1, 13

[Editorial: "The Palestine Question in King Husayn's Speech"]

[Text] In his important political speech at the graduation of a group of Royal War College students, His Majesty King Husayn, the supreme commander of the Armed Forces, explained Jordan's views on the current Middle East situation in the wake of the Gulf crisis and the emergence of intensive international diplomatic activity to resolve the region's conflict and solve the Palestine question from all its aspects.

King Husayn explained the reasons that prompted Jordan to welcome the U.S. plan announced by President George Bush on 6 March. Foremost among those reasons was the fact that the United States led the alliance under the umbrella of world legitimacy during the Gulf crisis, which gives credibility to this U.S. plan.

The four principles in the plan, including a land-for-peace barter, was a sound approach to a settlement based on world legitimacy, especially since the world showed great eagerness to implement this legitimacy to end the Gulf crisis while it failed to show similar eagerness toward the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Jordan, therefore, found that the U.S. plan meets the collective Arab demand of solving the Palestine question in accordance with world legitimacy, as was the case with the Gulf crisis. Jordan also viewed U.S. efforts to convene a peace conference on the region's crisis as activation of the principles of the plan, which call for a land-for-peace exchange and acknowledge the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Today, we find in the statements of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, in which he blames Israel for the faltering peace efforts, what prompts us to give even more support President Bush's plan This is so especially since we hear unprecedented U.S. language against Jewish settlements in occupied territories, and we feel U.S. determination to continue peace efforts despite all Israel's negative responses and increasing obstacles to the proposed peace conference.

If Baker's latest statements about Jewish settlements represent a reassessment of the U.S. position or signify a change in U.S. dealing with the intransigent Israeli position, we can say that our welcome of the U.S. plan was in order, and that the plan's principles and the efforts to activate it reflected sufficient U.S. desire to seize the available peace opportunity after the Gulf crisis.

On the other hand, if Baker's resounding remarks about Israel's obstacles to peace signal the beginning of an organized U.S. retreat from President Bush's plan, then the alternative will be a continuation of the fait accompli, which will ultimately cause further tension and enhance the likelihood of another war in the region.

When it welcomed the U.S. plan, Jordan hoped that the United States had drawn enough lessons from the Gulf crisis to reassess its Middle East policy and change its appeasement of Israel's intransigence. Such reassessment would definitely lead to direct U.S. pressure on Israel if the United States really wanted not to miss the chance for a historical just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

With James Baker considering Jewish settlements to be the major obstacle to peace and a threat to the very foundations of the U.S. plan, we have greater hopes of a firmer U.S. policy against Israel's intransigent position. Were we not obsessed by caution that the United States will, as usual, bend to Zionist pressure, we would say that Washington has made the first step toward exerting the necessary diplomatic pressure to break Israel's intransigence.

We still remember and remind others of His Majesty's words that the fait accompli Israel is seeking to prolong is not stagnant but continuously changing for the worse. We only have to draw a diagram of the missed peace opportunities to see that facts on the ground are today more painful than those that existed at every missed peace opportunity in the past.

Foreign Ministry Official on Kuwaiti Trials

JN2305135191 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 23-24 May 91 p 3

[By Sirin Halasah, special to the JORDAN TIMES]

[Excerpt] Amman—Jordan is closely monitoring the trials of Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates allegedly accused of collaborating with the Iraqis, despite the fact that Jordan has no official representation in the emirate, a senior Foreign Ministry official said Wednesday.

Mr. Mu'tasim al-Bilbaysi, secretary general of the Foreign Ministry, said that Jordan had informed the Kuwaiti government of its concern for the well-being of its citizens in Kuwait, and that "it is closely monitoring the current situation regarding the trials" of its citizens. "They know of our demand for the protection of our citizens in Kuwait," Mr. al-Bilbaysi said. "There is nothing else we can do at the moment," he added.

Earlier in March, Foreign Minister Tahir al-Masri requested the approval of the Kuwaiti government to send a Jordanian mission to Kuwait in a bid to ensure the safety of Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates there. The request was made by the Foreign Ministry following persisting reports which spoke of the mistreatment of the expatriates.

"Jordan could spare no efforts in pursuit of defending the rights of the Jordanian and Palestinian communities (in Kuwait)," Mr. al- Masri said at the time.

But judging by Mr. al-Bilbaysi's statement Wednesday, it seems that the Foreign Ministry's request to send a mission to Kuwait has not been granted.

Mr. al-Bilbaysi said that it was by "coincidence that the Foreign Ministry found out the names of 15 "Jordanian" journalists who are currently on trial in the emirate. They are charged with having worked on al-Nida' newspaper, the only newspaper allowed to operate in Kuwait during Iraq's seven-months occupation of the emirate, and for criticising the Royal family while working there. "We don't even have proof that they are Jordanian, or the number of their passports if they are," Mr. al-Bilbaysi told the Jordan Times. [passage omitted]

King Husayn, Mubarak Discuss Israeli 'Threats'

JN2305182091 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 May 91

[Mustafa Bakri dispatch from Cairo]

[Excerpt] Informed diplomatic sources have said that Jordan's King Husayn discussed with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, during their telephone contact yesterday, the recent efforts to revive the peace process in the region and the dimensions of the Israeli threats to some neighboring Arab countries. The sources told our radio that during their meeting the day before yesterday, the Jordanian ambassador in Cairo handed Dr. Usmah al-Baz a message from the Jordanian monarch to President Mubarak. According to the sources, the Jordanian monarch's message was a reply to the one President Mubarak sent to King Husayn.

In his message, the Jordanian monarch reaffirmed Jordan's appreciation of the importance of political coordination with the Egyptian leadership, noting the importance of continuing political dialogue among Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and the PLO, because they are the parties directly involved in resolving the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict. King Husayn said that the principles of this dialogue should be based on the international peace conference and the participation of the United Nations and the European states in this conference. King Husayn expressed Jordan's appreciation for the Egyptian position to bypass procedural issues to convene the conference. However, he noted that some of these issues might be related to some objective issues that could be discussed. He also noted the dimensions of the Israeli scheme to fragment the Arab position in this regard.

In his response to what President Mubarak proposed in his previous letter on the need to accept the invitation to convene the peace conference under the auspices of the two superpowers, King Husayn noted the need for the invitation to include a view on the proposed agenda and the points on which Israel agrees to embark on the peace steps in addition to the other points to which it objects. He said that these positions should be clear before agreeing to accept the invitation. [passage omitted]

Iraq's Ramadan Arrives in Amman en Route Home

JN2305171891 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Iraqi Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan has arrived in Amman en route home after representing Iraq at the celebrations of the Republic of Yemen on the occasion of the first anniversary of Yemeni unity. He was received at the airport by Mudar Badran, prime minister; Salim Masa'idah, deputy prime minister and interior minister; and Nuri al-Wayyis, Iraq's ambassador in Amman.

Al-Musawi Holds U.S. Responsible for Iraqi Crimes

NC2405072391 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0530 GMT 24 May 91

[Text] Hizballah Secretary General 'Abbas al-Musawi has held the United States responsible for the Iraqi regime's attacks on the holy shrines in Iraq. He stressed that the United States is the cause of all our misfortunes. He said that the United States claims to be a world leader but is practicing its repression and arrogance on all oppressed people.

In a speech delivered yesterday during a sit-in in Burj al-Barajinah in Beirut's southern suburbs to denounce the Iraqi regime's criminal attacks on the holy shrines, al-Musawi stressed that Iraq is now under the full control and hegemony of the United States. Saddam is only a facade through which the United States is trying to repress the Muslims.

Al-Musawi stressed that the issue is not one of the destruction of holy shrines but one of aggression and injustice. Through its attacks on the holy shrines, the United States wants to dampen every revolutionary spirit in Iraq.

Israeli Military Concentrations, Shelling Reported

NC2305112291 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] The Israeli occupation forces continued to concentrate military forces in the occupied border strip. Concentrations of mechanized forces have been monitored in the al-'Ayshiyah, al-Jarmaq, and al-Zaffatah areas.

Israeli artillery installed in the Sujud and al-Zaffatah hills have shelled the villages of 'Arab Salim, Jba', and 'Ayn Bu Siwar.

Kafr Tibnit and al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa came under 120-mm artillery fire at 1030 today.

Cabinet Urges UN Protest on Israeli 'Aggression'

NC2305195691 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1900 GMT 23 May 91

[Excerpt] The cabinet has asked the Lebanese ambassador to the United Nations to lodge a protest with the UN Security Council against Israel for its aggression in south Lebanon. [passage omitted]

Parliamentary Committees Approve Treaty With Syria

NC2305093791 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 25 May 91

[Excerpt] The joint parliamentary committees held a meeting this morning, which was attended by 26 deputies and 5 ministers. After a 25-minute discussion, the committees approved the treaty of brotherhood, cooperation, and coordination between lebanon and syria.

Chamber of Deputies Speaker Husayn al-Husayni has called for a general meeting of the Chamber on the morning of 27 May to approve the treaty. [passage omitted]

Shiite Group Against Government Links With Libya

NC2305055391 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0445 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] A secret Shiite organization calling itself the Green Brigades [al-Alwiyah al-Khadra'] has threatened the Lebanese Government not to establish any links with Libya until Libya releases Imam Musa al-Sadr and his two companions.

The organization accused Libya of bribing Lebanon with a consignment of arms which arrived in Beirut on Friday.

Buwayz Confers With Soviet Ambassador Ilichev

NC2005142891 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has begun his meetings with the ambassadors of the Security Council's five permanent member states to brief them on the Lebanese-Syrian treaty. Minister Buwayz also informed the ambassadors about security developments in southern Lebanon.

Today Minister Buwayz met with Soviet Ambassador Gennadiy Ilichev, who conveyed an official invitation for him to visit Moscow. The Soviet ambassador said that Israel's behavior is totally incompatible with the ongoing regional and international efforts to facilitate the regional peace process through an international conference. Ambassador Ilichev pointed out that Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh raised the issue of the implemention of Resolution 425 during his tour of the region. He said: Our stand on the resolution is known and we coordinate our steps with the Lebanese leadership. Ambassador Ilichev noted that the Lebanese Government is trying its utmost to restore stability and security to the south.

Hizballah Leader Interviewed on Beirut Situation

NC2405112691 Istanbul MILLIYET in Turkish 21 May 91 p 18

["Exclusive" interview with Hizballah leader Muhammad Hosayn Fadlallah by MILLIYET correspondent Rafet Balli in Beirut; date not given]

[Text]

The United States Started and Ended the Conflict in Lebanon

[Balli] The weapons have at last stopped firing in the 15-year internal war. Are you pleased with this state of affairs?

[Fadlallah] Naturally, it is impossible for the militia forces to create a reliable state of security for the people. Even if we may be not be happy with the government, the militia forces cannot be a viable alternative. This is why we are pleased that the arms are being handed over to the army in Lebanon.

[Balli] Why did you fight then? Who started the war and who has brought it to an end?

[Fadlallah] If you look at the history of Lebanon, you will see that clashes have occurred between various groups in the country for more than 100 years. These clashes have been provoked by foreign forces which, because of their political ambitions, wished to influence Lebanon. The struggle between the Ottoman Empire and the European countries and the struggle between the European countries themselves prolonged the clashes in Lebanon. We are convinced that the latest clash was provoked by the United States. Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger planned the internal war in Lebanon to weaken the Palestinian problem and the Palestinian resistance.... We are convinced that the internal war was provoked by the United States and maintained by the Arab countries; that is, both by those which are friendly with the United States and by those which are not. The United States brought the war to an end through the al-Ta'if agreement.

The United States Is Here to Stay

[Balli] Using the Kuwaiti crisis as a pretext, the United States and the other Western powers came to the Middle East. They then used the refugees as an excuse to maintain their presence. What is their intention? Do they wish to remain in this part of the world indefinitely?

[Fadlallah] The United States is trying to place Iraq's security, politics, and economy under its control. We believe that the United States is planning to overthrow the Iraqi regime through a military coup. I do not believe that the U.S. forces will withdraw from the Gulf region.

[Balli] The Kurdish problem is an important issue. How do you think this problem should be resolved?

[Fadlallah] We, as Muslims, believe that the Kurds are an Islamic people who have rights equal to those of other Islamic peoples. They have the right to use their own language in education and they have the right to learn about their culture and history. However, we are convinced that the establishment of an independent Kurdish state by the Kurds of Iraq, Turkey, and Iran will not serve the lofty interests of Islam. The countries I have mentioned should respect the people of Kurdish origin just as they respect the Turkic, Persian, and Arab peoples. This is because ethnic discrimination from the point of view of rights and responsibilities among Muslim communities has no place in Islam.

Turkey Must Take Its Place

[Balli] How do you feel about Turkey and how do you assess President Turgut Ozal's policies?

[Fadlallah] We believe that Turkey should turn to the eastern countries, regardless of the relations it has maintained with the Western world for many long years. Although Turkey has tried to become a European country, Europe has not allowed it to. That is why Europe has not given financial support to Turkey even within the EC framework to help it overcome its chronic economic crisis. Nor has NATO provided sufficient aid to Turkey for the purpose of its defense and for the purpose of renewing Turkey's arms.

The Western world needed Turkey to first remove the Ottoman caliphate and render Islam ineffective in the region. It then needed Turkey to stand against the Soviet Union. The first objective was realized when the caliphate was removed and Islam was weakened. This was followed by the termination of the cold war situation. Consequently, the Western world did not need Turkey anymore. In view of this, we are convinced that Turkey should assume its Islamic character and cooperate with its Islamic brethren, who want that country to be truly independent and free. The Muslims want Turkey to closely cooperate with all the Islamic countries to maintain an influential stand on all the region's political developments. If we look at Turgut Ozal's policies, we will see that he still acts in accordance with U.S. policies. We hope that Turgut Ozal will establish harmony not with the U.S. Administration but with his own people.

[Balli] Are you able to follow the Islamic movements in Turkey?

[Fadlallah] We sympathize with the Islamic movements in Turkey and we wholeheartedly support them.... We do not have detailed information on their movements however. We wish to convey the following view to the Muslim Turkish people: You are our close friends. Your strength is our strength and our strength is your strength. The European countries have planned to unite and become a single state in 1992. If we are unable to do the same, then let us at least try to be united in our activities and relations.

Al-Shar' Returns from Luxembourg, Brussels Visits

JN2405074391 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2015 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Damascus—Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and the delegation accompanying him returned to Damascus this evening at the end of a visit to Luxembourg which came in response to an invitation extended to him by the EC Presidency in order to meet with the European ministers. He also paid a brief working visit to Brussels where he held talks with the Belgian foreign relations minister and the EC commissioner.

UN Team Investigating Israeli 'Violations' Met

JN2405073791 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2015 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Damascus—The UN fact-finding mission tasked with investigating Israeli practices in the occupied Arab territories led by Mr. (C. Kalbash), Sri Lankan representative to the United Nations, met this evening with the competent officials at the Syrian Foreign Ministry.

Dr. Muhammad Mahdi al-Jazzar, head of the International Organizations and Conferences Department at the ministry, read out a statement during the meeting, explaining Israel's brutal and immoral practices against the residents of the occupied Arab territories and the Israeli attempts to obliterate the distinctive features and identity of the occupied Arab territories in a bid to Judaize them.

In his statement, Dr. al-Jazzar said that the sufferings of the residents of the occupied territories and the inhumane practices of the Israeli occupation authorities as well as their violations of international laws have become too formidable and intimidating to conceal and hide. In this regard, he referred to the settlement process, the escalation of the policies of repression and killing, house demolition, the repression of freedoms, deportations, the arrest of hundreds of citizens, the pursuit of a collective punishment policy, and the implementation of an iron fist policy to suppress the Arab masses' intifadah in the occupied Arab territories.

Dr. al-Jazzar noted that the Israeli occupation authorities' practices on the land of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan are escalating and that they are going to extremes in violating international laws and the UN Charter. He said: Israel continues its disgraceful acts in a bid to change the demographic features of the territories. The number of settlements built in the occupied Golan has reached 42, according to published figures. He indicated that Israel is attempting to obliterate the Syrian Arab identity of the occupied Golan area and to tear it away from the Syrian homeland, in flagrant violation of UN Security Council Resolution 497 and the UN General Assembly Resolution No. 9 issued in 1982.

During the meeting, the mission members asked questions about some of these practices and issues related to Israel's human rights violations in the occupied Arab territories, particularly in the occupied Golan.

Possible New Israeli Attack on Lebanon Seen

JN2105083991 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 21 May 91

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Thwarting Israel's Scheme in Lebanon is a Pan-Arab Responsibility," the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: Official and popular circles in fraternal Lebanon continue to welcome the treaty of brotherhood, cooperation, and coordination, which will contribute to organizing relations between the two fraternal countries in the various political, economic, educational, and security spheres.

This treaty has also attracted widespread Arab and international attention. There are those who support and bless it; and there are those who exhibit doubt, particularly Israel. Israel has begun beating the drums of war against Lebanon in a desperate attempt to prevent the implementation of this fraternal treaty.

AL-BA'TH adds: As is its wont before waging any aggression, Israel has started preparing for it by creating various pretexts. The forces it is rallying toward southern Lebanon are only a prelude to an aggression through which it hopes to shuffle the cards once more to escape from having to respond to the current international movement to establish a just and permament peace in the region. This is the peace Israel rejects outright. Therefore, the possibility that Israel will surprise the world with a new aggression on Lebanon is there; it would thus escape from the international efforts toward a just peace process in the region.

The newspaper concludes: It is necessary for the people of Lebanon, with their various political leanings, to rally around their legitimate authority to be able to continue the peace march, which has reached a very progressive stage. In this way, all the remaining points of the national charter document, which expresses the will and desire of all Lebanese, will be implemented.

Al-Shar' Interviewed Lebanon Treaty, Israel

JN2305191891 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1745 GMT 23 May 91

[Report on interview with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al- Shar' by Yusuf Dakkash in Paris on 23 May]

[Text] Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' stopped over in Paris today en route to Damascus after visits to Luxembourg and Brussels, where he held talks with the EC on economic ties and Middle East developments after the recent James Baker tour and also on Europe's role in a peace conference. The Syrian foreign minister stopped over in Paris after the ceremonial signing of the treaty of brotherhood, cooperation, and coordination between Lebanon and Syria. Hence, it was natural for all

the questions addressed to Faruq al-Shar' to center on this issue. Minister al-Shar' said that Syria is not seeking, for the time being, unity with Lebanon. He noted that this was the first time the Syrian Government had recognized the independence of Lebanon as a state. When we interviewed the Syrian foreign minister, the first question that came to our minds was whether he thinks that Israel is serious in viewing the Lebanese-Syrian treaty as posing a danger to it. We addressed the question to the Syrian foreign minister.

[Begin recording] [Dakkash] Mr. Minister, do you take the Israeli threats that view the treaty as a danger posed to Israel seriously? Or do you believe that they are part of a maneuver?

[Al-Shar'] The continuation of the Israeli occupation of Arab lands is a constant menace to the whole Arab nation. From time to time, Israel tries to create excuses, either to evade the peace process and international pressure to achieve a comprehensive and just settlement in the region, or to bolster and reinforce its expansionist ambitions in the region. In both cases, we believe that the current regional and international circumstances do not make it easy for Israel to launch an aggression against Lebanon. We are confident that the entire international community, including the European states, will stand against any new Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Moreover, I believe that the UN Security Council [UNSC] will be mobilized to tackle such a development if it were to take place. Israel is aware of this. Similarly, it is aware that the entire world knows quite well that it is attempting to evade the current peace process and to sabotage the current international efforts to convene a Middle East peace conference. In addition to this, Israel is trying to evade the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions, those related to its occupation of southern Lebanon such as Resolution 425 and Resolution 242, which calls for its withdrawal from the Golan, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip. [end recording]

Questions on the Syrian-Lebanese treaty continued. Minister al- Shar' said that Syria is defending Lebanon's independence. He went on to say that the articles of the treaty are in full harmony with the al-Ta'if agreement. But, why does the treaty have to be signed now?

[Begin Al-Shar' recording] The historic ties, the common destiny of both Syria and Lebanon, and the common geography linking the two countries require the establishment of the best ties between Syria and Lebanon. We believe that the difficult experiences through which Lebanon has gone since the eruption of the civil war and the Israeli aggression in 1982, which had negative effects that Lebanon has experienced over the past few years, confirm the pressing need for establishing special and distinguished ties between Syria and Lebanon in the interest of the two countries and peoples and to promote regional security and stability. [end recording]

Some people inside and outside Lebanon view the signing of the treaty as a mere consecration of the balance of power and also as a move aimed at imposing Syria's control over Lebanon and its independence? What is the Syrian foreign minister's reaction to such an analysis?

[Begin Al-Shar' recording] First of all, I would like to say that those Lebanese who think this way are not the majority; they are in the minority. This minority does not reflect the opinion of a large number of people, if we are to take into account the opinions of the overwhelming majority of the Lebanese people and their pan-Arab aspirations, the majority of which has strong Arab affiliations and advocates the establishment of special and distinguished ties with Syria. I can safely say that such opinions serve the Israeli regional scheme. We have not heard a single honorable Lebanese speak using such language or expressing such opinions on the Syrian-Lebanese relationship.

Even the two ministers who did not participate in the signing ceremony that took place in Damascus yesterday did not oppose the provisions of the treaty, nor did they talk about Syrian hegemony or violation of Lebanese sovereignty. They came to Damascus, spoke with Syrian officials, and expressed their strong conviction that relations between Syria and Lebanon are truly distinguished and special and that they are based on the long history between the two countries as well as on geography and mutual interests between Syria and Lebanon. [end recording]

While the Lebanese militias are continuing to hand over their weapons, what is Syria's opinion, or how does Syria view the armed Palestinian presence in southern Lebanon?

[Begin Al-Shar' recording] There is UN Security Council Resolution No. 425, which calls on Israel to withdraw unconditionally from southern Lebanon. The United States and some European states said in the past that when a central Lebanese government is formed, when the Lebanese Army is united, and when this central Lebanese government is able to dispatch the army to the south, then all the Israeli pretexts will fall. The Lebanese Government has taken several measures in this regard. The Lebanese Army is now united. The Lebanese Government has also made a decision to dispatch units from the Lebanese Army to the international border side by side with the UN Interim Forces in Lebanon. Therefore, I can say that Israel is squeezed into a corner where it must respect international legitimacy and implement the UN Security Council resolutions. [end recording]

The interview with Faruq al-Shar' then moved to the Gulf. Egypt decided to withdraw its forces from the Gulf, and will the Syrian forces withdraw soon?

[Begin Al-Shar' recording] At the sidelines of the Arab League meeting in Cairo a meeting was held among the foreign ministers of the eight states that signed the Damascus Declaration. The eight ministers agreed to continue these meetings. They also agreed to form a preparatory committee to study the various aspects of the Damascus Declaration in order to implement the principles and objectives included in it. [end recording]

Commentary Examines Role, Stature in Region

JN1905165891 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 19 May 91

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: Every time Israel and our enemies seek to talk down and belittle Syria, Syria only grows in stature. This has been the pattern throughout, and has never been more so than now when serious moves are afoot to promote peace and justice, and, when, for once in a half century, the specter of war seems to be receding [passage indistinct] that puts Syria in the forefront of the countries most directely concerned with the present and future of the region, it has, over the past two decades, assumed an unquestionable role and stature thanks to the unique leadership of struggler President Hafiz al-Asad, who, having grasped the significance of Syria's unique historical and geographic position, made the most of it in national and pan-Arab battles. The origins and developments of the Lebanese crisis may be debatable, but it is beyond question that Syria was the first to comprehend and appreciate the spark that triggered the crisis of brotherly Lebanon. Neither can anyone dispute the matchless dexterity with which Syria has handled the Lebanese crisis, and that as Lebanon struggles to convalesce, Syria conducts itself in the manner of an indispensable brother. Syria has consistently approached Lebanon in the context of its pan-Arab responsibilities—shouldered voluntarily and with full conviction.

Likewise, the developments and the current phase of the Arab-Zionist conflict may be subject to debate. There can be no question, however, that Syria has never failed to take real interest in this evolving conflict, and that, on that score, it has never been better placed to shoulder its responsibilities. Clearly Israel is piqued by Syria's posture and policies on the current peacemaking efforts. This is because Israel well understands that there can be no bypassing Syria, and that Syrian demands, representing as they do wider Arab interests, advancement, peace and freedom, are shared by all Arabs. Assuming its pan-Arab responsibilities, and pursuing such policies, Syria today is the hub of Arab activity and a Mecca for all Arabs to map out a program of action to further pan-Arab interests and rights and thwart Israeli designs and machinations.

Syria's role and stature are not something to be bestowed on us, much less to be stolen from us. Earned over many years of hard work, our stature and role can, under no circumstances, be bypassed or dispensed with.

Treaty Said Major Step With Positive Implications

JN2305122191 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 23 May 91

[Press review]

[Text] In a commentary, TISHRIN says: The joint history, geography, and blood between Syria and Lebanon was created by God. With these powerful, highly-expressive words, leader al-Asad summed up the organic historical relations between the two countries. These ties, in fact, link one people living in two independent states as deemed by events and circumstances.

TISHRIN adds: No moment has made us happier and more confident and optimistic than that in which the treaty of brotherhood was signed between two countries that, by virtue of their courage and sacrifice, managed to defeat all enemies and covetous ones and to exult about their bonds before all the world. The paper adds: The treaty of brotherhood, cooperation, and coordination signed by Presidents al-Asad and al-Hirawi in Damascus yesterday culminates the two countries' efforts over 19 difficult years to maintain their links and ward off the dangers they faced. Nothing is more pleasant than seeing the entire official and popular Lebanon in Damascus expressing appreciation for Syria's efforts and sacrifices, with leader al-Asad stressing for the umpteenth time that Syria will support Lebanon in good and bad times, regardless of the obstacles and sacrifices, and that Syria will continue to support the legitimate government until it strengthens its presence in all areas.

TISHRIN concludes: The signing of the treaty is an important major step with positive implications on the Lebanese national reconciliation march, on endeavors to restore occupied southern Lebanon, and on cooperation between the two fraternal countries to enforce their links, strengthen their power, and firm up their joint confrontation of the common enemy which covets the land and the wealth. Perhaps this explains Israel's nervousness and reckless threats, which will inevitably be dashed on the rock of Syrian- Lebanese cooperation.

Under the headline "Major Action", AL-THAWRAH says in one of its commentaries today that 22 May 1991 has gone down in contemporary Arab history as a landmark. It is the day of a prominent Arab development—the signing of the Syrian-Lebanese treaty of brotherhood, cooperation and coordination by Presidents Hafiz al- Asad and Ilyas al-Hirawi in a grand ceremony befitting this major occasion.

The paper adds: The treaty is a prominent mark and a major stop in the two countries' joint march, which was entrenched through the massive sacrifices Syria made to put an end to the civil war that swept fraternal Lebanon. The treaty also boosts the potential of the legitimate Lebanese Government and heightens its ability to deepen the steps taken so far toward the implementation of the national charter document in all aspects.

AL-THAWRAH explains that the treaty, which represents an era baptized by blood, is the first legal, contractual document between the two countries with a clear picture of the fraternal and distinguished relations between the two countries and of the future shape of these relations.

The paper concludes with leader al-Asad's assertion at the signing ceremony that the treaty is a major act that opens the way to cooperation at all levels to serve the two countries on equal footing in a spirit of brotherhood and mutual benefit. For, the treaty provides for reciprocal obligations for the good and the strength of both countries.

Afghanistan

Government Statement on UN Settlement Plan

LD2205173191 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 22 May 91

[Text] Statement of the Republic of Afghanistan: In New York yesterday, UN Secretary General His Excellency Javier Perez de Cuellar issued a five point declaration as a general principle on peaceful and political solution of the Afghan problem. The State of the Republic of Afghanistan has been actively involved in the drafting and completion of the plan right from the beginning of work and has cordially cooperated in preparing it with His Excellency the UN secretary general and his special envoy. The Republic of Afghanistan, in welcoming the plan and declaring full support for it, is ready, using all capabilities, to cooperate with the sides involved and with the UN secretary general in the implementation of the plan.

The Republic of Afghanistan is of the opinion that the fulfillment of the present plan, based on realities and reflecting views and interests of all sides, can put an end to the war and bloodshed in the country, and lays a strong foundation for ensuring peace and for independence, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Afghanistan.

The Republic of Afghanistan considers those principles, reflected in the present plan, compatible with the wishes of the people of Afghanistan, ensuring peace and the end to war in the country, and compatible with previous proposals of the Republic of Afghanistan on a political solution.

The Republic of Afghanistan calls on all Afghans, opposition leaders, internal commanders, and on all parties and organizations and on all societies and personalities inside and outside the country not to lose this historic opportunity and to welcome international community's voice, reflected in the declaration of the UN secretary general, for reaching a political solution and for the end to war, and to come together hand in hand for its implementation—and not to spare their efforts in this respect.

The Republic of Afghanistan requests the international community, neighboring countries, Islamic countries, organizations, societies and international personalities to cooperate harmoniously and jointly to fulfill this plan and to help the Afghans attain peace.

The Republic of Afghanistan once again thanks the UN secretary general for his good offices and for comprehensive and peaceful solution of the Afghan problem. It promises any kind of cordial cooperation in this respect.

Plan 'Raises Fresh Hopes'

BK2305120091 Hong Kong AFP in English 1141 GMT 23 May 91

[By Anosh Ahamath]

[Excerpts] Kabul, May 23 (AFP)—A United Nations plan for a political solution to the 12-year-old Afghan conflict amid conciliatory moves by mujahidin guerillas has raised fresh hopes for peace here, diplomats and officials say.

The five-point plan issued by U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and accepted by the Kabul government contains basic elements widely seen as essential to a political settlement of the Afghan conflict. [passage omitted]

"Certainly," a Western diplomat agreed, "there is a great deal of optimism in government circles as a result of the U.N. efforts." [passage omitted]

The optimism generated by the U.N. initiative has been matched by the enthusiasm shown by government leaders here toward the response of the Soviet Union, Germany and some mujahidin representatives. (In Peshawar, a spokesman for the resistance Afghan Interim Government said Wednesday the mujahidin would not enter into a dialogue with the ruling party in Kabul "under any circumstances.")

Afghan Foreign Minister Abdul Wakil, who visited Moscow and Bonn earlier this month, said he was pleased with talks he held with Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh and German leaders.

"In view of the reciprocal existing understanding, the Soviet side has assured us of the continuation of their efforts in order to reach a political settlement of the situation in our country," Mr. Wakil told AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE. [passage omitted]

Diplomats said the peace moves under way have, for the time being, sidelined the three fundamentalist mujahidin groups, Hezb-e- Eslami (Islamic party), Ittihade-Eslami (Islamic Unity) and a faction of the Hezbe-Eslami led by Yunis Khales.

The conciliatory statements by some of the rebels should also please President Najibullah, who would prefer to make a political deal with anyone other than Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, head of the Hezb-e- Eslami and a long-time foe, diplomats said.

"The personalities of Najibullah and Hekmatyar have been the problem," said one diplomat.

"Najibullah's background as a former secret service chief has not contributed to confidence building among the rebels and the government," he said. "Likewise, Hekmatyar is being viewed here as an extremist-plus."

He said the United Nations offered the best hope to end the Afghan situation.

"The government is banking heavily on the United Nations to bring about a political solution," he said.

India

'Elaborate Security' Set Up for Gandhi Funeral

BK2405052291 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 24 May 91

[Text] Elaborate security arrangements have been made in the capital specially in view of the presence of a galaxy of world leaders for the funeral. Twenty-five companies of paramilitary forces and 10 companies of the National Security Guards are being specially deployed for the purpose. All central government offices, central public undertakings in Delhi, and all offices of the Delhi Administration will remain closed today.

The Transport Corporation is operating services as usual today. A spokesman of the corporation said the inter-state bus services will also operate normally.

Several state governments have declared a public holiday today. The Supreme Court, the Delhi High Court, and the subordinate courts will also remained closed. Streams of people are still lining up at Tin Murti Bhavan to pay homage to Rajiv Gandhi. A large number of women have come from different parts of the country. Our correspondent says that hundreds of people from outside Delhi were seen walking from miles inquiring their way to Tin Murti Bhavan. [sentence as heard]

Several more world leaders have mourned the dastardly killing of Rajiv Gandhi. The vice president of the Soviet Union, Mr. Yanayev, has described Mr. Gandhi as a great son of India who did a lot for strengthening Indo-Soviet relations. The Egyptian president, Mr. Husni Mubarak, in his message, said Mr. Gandhi served to defend the just causes of the people of the Third World and made great contribution to the efforts aimed at establishing a new international order.

Funeral Begins; Foreign Leaders Pay Respects

BK2405094891 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 24 May 91

[Text] The funeral procession of the late Congress-I president and former prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, began from Teen Murti Bhavan around 1315 [0740] and is now on its way to Shaktisthal [the cremation site]. His mortal remains have been placed on a flower-bedecked gun carriage on which garlands and flowers are being showered by mourning people all along the route. The procession is being led by several platoons of the Army, Navy, and the Air Force with the bands playing doleful music. The huge procession is expected to reach Shaktisthal around 1530 where Mr. Gandhi will be cremated with full state honors as his mother Mrs. Indira Gandhi was on 3 November 1984. The procession will cover about 10 km and pass through Vijay Chowk, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, Connaught Place, and Jawaharlal Nehru Marg before reaching its destination. The mortal remains of Rajiv Gandhi were prepared for last rites in the presence of his family members, close relatives, and senior Congress-I leaders. Teen Murti Bhavan was closed at 1130 in the morning to public, leaving many mourners disappointed who could not pay their last respects to the departed leader. The prime minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, placed a wreath on the body and paid his homage. The funeral procession is expected to reach Shaktisthal around 1530.

Touching scenes were witnessed as the body was brought from the central room to the gun carriage. The three service chiefs, Mr. Rahul Gandhi, close relatives, and family friends were the pallbearers. People surged forward to have a glimpse of the beloved leader and the sombre atmosphere was marked with Rajiv Amar Rahe [remain immortal] continuously rending the air.

Many world leaders have arrived in the capital to attend the funeral of Rajiv Gandhi. They are the U.S. vice president, Mr. Dan Quayle; the prime minister of Pakistan, Mr. Nawaz Sharif; the PLO chief, Mr. Yasir 'Arafat; the Chinese vice premier, Mr. Wu Xueqian; Prince Charles of England; Nepalese Prime Minister Mr. K.P. Bhattarai; the Afghan president, Dr. Najibullah; Vice Admiral M.N. (Yaqub) of Nigeria; and the president of the Italian Senate, (Juvania Swadini).

Talking to newsmen on arrival, Mr. Dan Quayle expressed grief on behalf of President Bush and the American people and said the assassination of Mr. Gandhi is an outrage. The Pakistan prime minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, who is leading a 19-member delegation, described Mr. Gandhi as a leader of international stature. The PLO chief, Mr. Yasir 'Arafat, expressing grief over the assassination of Mr. Gandhi, said it is a loss not only to India but to the entire Arab world.

A number of foreign dignitaries, who have arrived in the capital to attend the funeral, called on the prime minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar. They include United States Vice President Mr. Dan Quayle, the prime minister of Nepal, Mr. K.P. Bhattarai; the foreign minister of Germany, Mr. Genscher; the crown prince, Willem Alexander, of the Netherlands; and the minister of human resources of Malaysia, Datu Lim Ah Lek. The prime minister of Mauritius, Mr. Aneerood Jugnauth, was the first to call on Mr. Chandra Shekhar in the morning. The former prime minister of Japan, Mr. Takeshita; the vice president of the Soviet Union, Mr. Yanayev; and the prime minister of Zambia, General Masheke, also called on him.

Pakistan's Sharif Stresses Improved Ties

BK2405084491 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 24 May 91

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, arrived in New Delhi this morning on a two-day visit to India. He will attend the cremation of the former Indian prime minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, taking place this afternoon. Talking to newsmen on arrival at the New Delhi Airport, Mr. Nawaz Sharif said he had come to personally express the grief of the people and the government of Pakistan with the people of India over the tragic death of Mr.

Rajiv Gandhi. The prime minister said he had great regard and respect for Mr. Rajiv Gandhi who he had the occasion to meet (?first).

Replying to a question, he said the need of the hour was that there should be improvement in Indo-Pak relations. Leaders of the two countries should realize that confrontation against each other was not in their interest. The prime minister, accompanied by members of his delegation, drove straight from the airport to Teen Murti House where he laid wreath over the body of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. He stood in silence for a few minutes as mark of respect to the departed soul. Mr. Nawaz Sharif also condoled personally with Mrs. Sonia Gandhi at the tragic death of her husband and signed the condolence book.

Party Committee To Urge Sonia Gandhi To Accept

BK2305145891 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Mrs. Sonia Gandhi has declined to accept the presidentship of the Congress-I and said that the tragedy which has befallen her and her children does not make it possible for her to accept the offer. In a statement in New Delhi, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi said she was deeply touched by the trust placed on her by the Central Working Committee [CWC] of the party.

The CWC had yesterday unanimously chosen Mrs. Sonia Gandhi as the new president of the party in place of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

Recalling that Pandit [Jawaharlal] Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and her late husband dedicated their lives to the party and the country, she said their memory and their sacrifices as also of innumerable other Congress men and women will enable the party to emerge even stronger.

Replying to questions by newsmen, the party spokesman, Mr. Pranab Mukherji said the Working Committee will consider all aspects of the matter, including persuading Mrs. Sonia Gandhi to change her mind. He said the committee will meet at an appropriate time after the cremation of the mortal remains of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

Answering a volley of questions, Mr. Mukherji denied that the Working Committee had taken the decision in haste or there was any differences on the choice of Mrs. Sonia Gandhi.

Asked whether he would stake his claim to the party presidentship in case a new leader is to be elected, Mr. Mukherji said he would think of crossing the bridge when he reaches it.

Parties Reject Coalition Government

BK2305162191 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] The Congress-I, the National Front, and the Left parties have rejected the idea of a national government at the center, while the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] says it is willing to consider it depending on others' views. The spokesman of the National Front-Left parties combined, Mr. Jaipal Reddy, told newsmen in New Delhi that the issue was discussed when Mr. V.P. Singh and Mr. Jyoti Basu met the president, Mr. R. Venkataraman. He said the president expressed concern over the deteriorating law and order situation and the possibility of a hung parliament after the elections. Declining to give more details, Mr. Reddy said there is no question of forming a national government in the midst of elections.

The Congress-I spokesman, Mr. Pranab Mukherji, said the idea of a national government was not discussed when his party delegation called on the president this morning. He said the question of a national government should not arise in view of the country's democratic traditions. Mr. Mukherji hoped that a new government will be formed after the elections, a process for which is now on. He took exception to the BJP's criticism of the choice of Mrs. Sonia Gandhi as Congress-I president as it was purely an internal matter of the Congress-I Party.

The BJP spokesman, Mr. K.R. Malkani, said the proposal of a national government will be discussed by the party's national executive at its two-day session beginning in New Delhi on Saturday [25 May]. The BJP president, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, said that the party leadership held informal discussions on the matter today.

The Samajwadi Janata Party spokesman, Mr. Satya Prakash Malaviya, said it will not be proper for his party to say anything on the formation of a national government before the poll results are out.

Several major political parties have criticized the Election Commission's decision to postpone the second and third phases of the current polls to next month. A spokesman of the National Front-Left parties combined, Mr. Jaipal Reddy, said the commission has arrived at a decision without consulting any political party.

The Congress-I spokesman, Mr. Pranab Mukherji, also criticized the postponement of the polls without having consultations with the political parties. He said the issue will soon be discussed by the Working Committee of the party.

The BJP spokesman, Mr. K.R. Malkani, has urged the election commission to consider holding the two remaining phases on either the 11th or the 13th of next month, instead of the 12th, which is a Hindu festival day.

The Samajwadi Janata Party secretary general, Mr. Om Prakash Chauthala, has demanded that the second and the third phases of polling should be held at the earliest. He said the commission should advance the fresh election dates, as the 12th and the 15th of June will be too far away.

The chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, meanwhile said today that he is carefully considering the demand made by some political parties for advancement of the dates for the second and third phases of the polling.

National Front-Left Condemns Attacks on Leaders

BK2305160991 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] The leaders of the National Front-Left parties combined have condemned the attacks on their party workers and leaders at their residences. They said some elements are exploiting the situation for narrow partisan ends. Releasing a combined statement, the Janata Dal spokesman, Mr. Jaipal Reddy, scotched rumors on attempt of the life of Mr Ramvilas Paswan and said Mr. Paswan is safe and sound.

In a resolution passed today, the combined have condemned the assassination of Mr. Gandhi and have urged all political parties to evolve a national approach to counter senseless violence.

Party Rejects Call for Shekhar Resignation

BK2405115491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1135 GMT 24 May 91

[Text] The Samajwadi Janata Party has rejected the National Front-Left Parties' demand for the resignation of the prime minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, saying there was no security lapse. The party general secretary, Mr. Satya Prakash Malaviya, stressed that the security was foolproof and that Rajiv Gandhi discarded the security arrangements to be closer to the people. Mr. Malaviya accused the National Front and its allies of shamelessly trying to gain political advantage out of the tragedy.

Reportage on Investigation of Assassination

Law Minister: LTTE Implicated

BK2305125191 Hong Kong AFP in English 1244 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] New Delhi, May 23 (AFP)—A senior Indian minister said Thursday evidence was pointing increasingly towards the involvement of a Sri Lankan Tamil guerrilla group in the assassination of former Premier Rajiv Gandhi.

"We have no clinching proof yet," Law Minister Subramanium Swamy told reporters. "But prima facie there is enough material to point out that the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) is the suspect."

He did not detail what evidence he had, but said Sri Lankan defence authorities had said they were convinced the LTTE, the most powerful Sri Lankan Tamil guerrilla group, was behind the blast that killed Mr. Gandhi and 16 others Tuesday night.

The assassination, he said, was "clearly aimed" at destabilizing India.

The Indian Army fought the LTTE in a bloody bush war for 32 months under a pact signed by Mr. Gandhi aimed at helping end the Tamil separatist campaign in Sri Lanka.

Authorities Suspect Suicide-Bomber

BK2305152091 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Preliminary investigations by a special invetsigating team suspect a young woman acting as a live bomb to be responsible for the explosion killing Mr. Rajiv Gandhi on Tuesday [22 May] night. The woman, who was also killed in the blast, was found to be carrying on her back explosives, a battery charger and other materials. The team headed by the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] is working on establishing the identity of the woman.

Disclosing this to newsmen, the minister of state for home, Mr. Subodh Kant, said that a cameraman, who was killed in the blast, has been identified.

Asked regarding the possible involvement of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] in the assassination, he said no observation can be made at this stage. No one has been detained in the case.

Investigators Visit Bomb Blast Site

BK2405065291 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 24 May 91

[Text] A special investigation team set up to probe the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi visited the bomb-blast site at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu yesterday. It collected samples of blood, clothes, footwear, hair and mud. Later, it left for Kanchipuram where the body of the unidentified woman who is said to have set off the blast by carrying explosives in a belt is being kept in a mortuary. The CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] director, Mr. Bijay Karan, said that team is helpful of tracking down the culprits. The death toll in the bomb blast has risen to 18 with the death of two injured police personnel in a hospital in Madras yesterday.

Paper Details Explosive

BK2405090691 Hong Kong AFP in English 0853 GMT 24 May 91

[Text] New Delhi, May 24 (AFP)—Former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi was killed by a highly malleable plastic explosive used in military operations, the HINDU newspaper reported Friday.

The daily quoted forensic experts as saying that the Tuesday assassination of Mr. Gandhi in Tamil Nadu State was a professional job, probably involving more than one person.

The HINDU, published from the Tamil Nadu capital Madras, also carried two photographs, one of a young woman holding a garland in her hand who is believed to have carried out the suicide attack, and one of her shattered body.

Federal Minister of State for Home Subodh Kant Sahay said Thursday that a woman suicide bomber with explosives wired to her body was the key suspect, and that the bomb was designed to explode if she leaned over.

A wire, a spring and an imported battery had been found among the remains of the woman's torso, Mr. Sahay said, adding that the upper portion of her body was completely blown off.

Mr. Gandhi, who was making an election campaign swing through southern India, died instantly in the blast, along with 17 other people.

The HINDU said the "waist belt (worn) by the unidentified woman contained a plastic explosive used in military operations, known as c1, c2, c3 composition. Its major constituent is RDX (Cyclotrimethylene Trinitramine)."

It quoted experts as saying that the explosive was "highly malleable, making it easy for the woman to place it in her waist belt" and that it could not be traced by conventional metal detectors.

The newspaper said investigating agencies had collected from the blast site in Sriperumpudur town bits of the explosive and hundreds of steel pellets, "similar to the ones ... embedded in the body of Rajiv Gandhi."

It quoted P. Chandrasekharan, director of the Tamil Nadu Forensic Sciences Department, as saying that the assassination "had been executed with dexterity and finesse which indicated the involvement of more than one person."

"Although we had come across several bombs and letter bombs, this is the first time we see this type of a highly powerful explosive device in India," he said. "Involvement of professional hands is obvious."

The HINDU report made no mention of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Sri Lanka's dominant Tamil separatist group which was accused by Indian Law Minister Subramanium Swamy on Thursday of carrying out the killing.

The LTTE, which was once armed and harboured by New Delhi but has since fallen out of favour, has denied killing Mr. Gandhi, 47, who ordered the Indian army into Sri Lanka in July 1987 to end Tamil separatism.

The HINDU said forensic experts, judging by the impact of the blast, thought that the distance between Mr. Gandhi and the assassin must have been only 1.5 meters to two meters (yards).

"Except for Mr. Gandhi and the woman, others might have died of shock waves before being hit by splinters from the explosion," it added.

The government has ordered a high-level investigation into the assassination, to be probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) along with other federal intelligence agencies.

Tamil Nadu Leader Wants Sri Lankan Tamils Out

BK2305160091 Hong Kong AFP in English 1548 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] New Delhi, May 23 (AFP)—A politician tipped to win elections in India's Tamil Nadu State where Rajiv Gandhi was killed asked the government Thursday to send home all Sri Lankan Tamils.

Implicitly blaming the assassination on Sri Lankan Tamils, Jayalalitha Jayaram told reporters: "I appeal, rather demand, that the centre should take immediate action to see that all Sri Lankan Tamils are sent back."

"This (repatriation) should take place immediately," the PRESS TRUST OF INDIA (PTI) quoted Ms. Jayalalitha as saying in the Tamil Nadu capital Madras before leaving for New Delhi for Mr. Gandhi's funeral Friday.

Ms. Jayalalitha, an actress-turned-politician, heads the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), which is widely expected to storm to power in Tamil Nadu in elections now postponed until June.

She said the assassination of Mr. Gandhi, whose Congress (I) Party is in alliance with AIADMK, was a "horrendous tragedy" and that the "Sri Lankan Tamil militants had totally ruined the peaceful culture of Tamil Nadu."

Tamil Nadu, a sprawling coastal state, is home to an estimated 200,000 Sri Lankan Tamils who have fled their country and scores of Tamil rebels, including many from the powerful Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The LTTE has emerged as a prime suspect in the Gandhi murder. But the group has denied involvement.

"We looked forward to a period of stability and economic progress under Mr. Gandhi ... Now once again the country's future and destiny have become uncertain," Ms. Jayalalitha said.

The AIADMK leader's statement came a day after K. Ramamurthy, president of the Tamil Nadu Congress chapter, made a similar demand.

"Even a single person should not remain here, whoever it might be, because everybody comes in the guise of refugees," he said in Madras. "They have come seeking asylum and they cannot dictate. Let them do all their nonsense in Eelam."

Eelam is the name given by Tamil militants to their proposed homeland in Sri Lanka.

Spokesman: No Violence Reported; Rumors Denied

BK2305130491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] The law and order situation in the country is under control. An official spokesman told newsmen in

New Delhi that there are no reports of any violent incidents from any part of the country.

He said there are attempts at spreading disinformation in New Delhi. The authorities have denied these rumors and asked the people to remain calm without being provoked by these rumors.

It has been officially clarified that there is no truth about the arrest of or attack on some political leaders in Tamil Nadu. The state government in a press release in Madras today appealed to the public not to give any credence to rumors.

Situation 'Fully Under Control'

BK2405042091 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 24 May 91

[Text] The overall law and order situation in the country continues to be fully under control. In Uttar Pradesh, the situation in curfew bound areas of Meerut, Kanpur, Varanasi, Gulawati and Secunderabad towns of Bulandshahr District continues to be peaceful. An official spokesman told our Lucknow correspondent that no incident has been reported from anywhere during the past 24 hours. The curfew has been relaxed today in Kanpur and Varanasi in phases.

In Andhra Pradesh, the curfew has been lifted in Hyderabad and in many towns in the coastal region. In Tripura, dust to dawn curfew has been imposed in Agartala and its surrounding areas as a precautionary measure. In West Bengal, one person was injured in a bomb explosion in Calcutta. In Tamil Nadu, precautionary measures have been taken to maintain law and order. There will be not any bus services in the state except in the district headquarters towns and in Madras. The state governor, Mr. Bhishma Narayan Singh, has asked the Army to stand by.

The all party meeting convened by the state government in Madras yesterday called upon the people to be vigilant against the antisocial elements which are spreading vile rumors. The appeal followed violent clashes between various political party workers.

Situation Updated 24 May

BK2405092891 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 24 May 91

[Text] The overall law and order situation in the country continues to be fully under control. In Tamil Nadu, the buses were off the road in Madras. Train services, including suburban bus services, are, however, functioning.

In Himachal Pradesh, the State Transport Corporation has suspended the interstate as well as the local bus services.

At Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, curfew was relaxed in a phased manner for five hours today in various parts of the city, following an improvement in the law and order situation in the city. Police said no untoward incident has been reported from any place since last night.

In Tripura, curfew has been imposed in Udaipur area of south district, following violent incidents. One person was killed and another seriously injured in a group clash in the area.

Iran

President Expresses Sorrow on Gandhi Death

LD2305182791 Tehran IRNA in English 1014 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Tehran, May 23, IRNA—President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani cabled a message of condolence to his Indian counterpart Ramaswamy Venkataraman on Thursday expressing deep sympathy over the loss of the former Indian prime minister and leader of the Congress (I) Party, Rajiv Gandhi, who was assassinated Tuesday night.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said in his message that assassination of Rajiv Gandhi has put him in deep sorrow. "His loss is undoubtedly a tragedy for the Indian Government and the nation," the message added.

Gandhi was killed Tuesday night in Tamil Nadu, southern India, by yet unidentified assassin in an election rally.

Velayati Holds Talks With Pakistani Official

BK2305070691 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 23 may 91

[Text] The first round of talks between Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati and Pakistan's foreign affairs secretary general was held in Tehran yesterday. The two sides agreed that the Afghanistan problem should be resolved politically. They also reviewed the deteriorating situation in Indian-occupied Kashmir, and expressed concern over the continued violation of human rights and suppression of the movement for right of self-determination.

Pakistan's ECO Delegate on Cooperation

BK2305080291 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 23 may 91

[Text] Pakistan has underscored the need for increasing scientific and technical cooperation among member-countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization [ECO] in economic, industrial, and trade fields. This was stated by Foreign Affairs Secretary General Akram Zaki when he addressed a two-day meeting of the ECO ministerial council which began in Tehran yesterday. He said their measures may infuse a new spirit into the organization, which will reflect the full commitment of the leadership of the three countries—Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey—to the ECO. Akram Zaki said much work has already been done to establish financial institutions

and to foster free trade, which will boost mutual cooperation among three countries in the field of economic development, especially through investments in joint industrial ventures.

Iran's first vice president, Dr. Hasan Habibi, inaugurated the meeting He sais that the ECO membercountries have the ability to overcome most of their economic difficulties. Iran's Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati said only a reinvigorated and effective ECO will open new avenues of cooperation. Turkish Minister of State for Economic Affairs Celebi, stressed the need to pursue a policy of free trade and to establish joint ventures.

Habibi Meets DPRK Parliamentary Leader

LD2305164591 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1430 GMT 22 May 91

[Text] Mr. Paek In-chon, vice chairman of the DPRK Supreme Assembly and the head of the Iran-North Korea Parliamentary Friendship Group, met and conferred with First Vice President Habibi this afternoon. In that meeting he termed relations between Iran and Korea as good and positive, and he submitted to Mr. Habibi a report on discussions held concerning the two Koreas' unity.

The first vice president, in that meeting, termed relations between Iran and Korea as friendly and long-established, and expressed the hope that unity between the two Koreas materializes as soon as possible.

General Staff Command Pledges Allegiance

LD2305113691 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 23 May 91

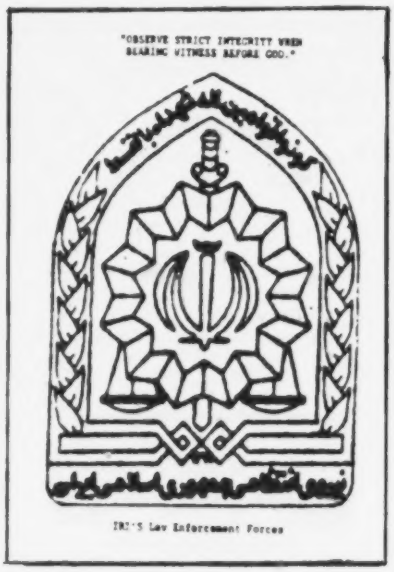
[Text] The General Staff Command issued a communique on the occasion of the 24 May Day of God, the anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr, announcing their aversion to the beastly actions of the Ba'thist criminals, reaffirming their agreement with the lofty ideals of the late imam, and reiterating the divine allegiance of the armed forces to His Eminence, the leader, Ayatollah Khamene'i. It announced: The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with all its strength and vigilance, will not rest for a moment in promoting the holy objectives of the Islamic revolution.

Another part of the General Staff Command's communique states: With the liberation of Khorramshahr, the idol of pride and arrogance, with all its superficial power, was crushed and the sincere combatants of Islam in the Army, Revolution Guards Corps, and the Basij Corps defeated the enemy.

* Merging of Forces Not Yet Materialized

91AS0882B London KEYHAN in Persian 25 Apr 91 p 2

[Text] Last week, Minister of the Interior 'Abdollah Nuri confirmed that in practice the consolidation of Law Enforcement Forces has not yet begun. In a radio and television press conference, he said: Extensive measures have been planned for the formation of Law Enforcement Forces, and we now intend to implement them.



IRI'S Law Enforcement Forces

Sheykh 'Abdollah Nuri discussed the new uniforms and insignia of the Law Enforcement Forces. He said: The official color of all the Law Enforcement Forces is dark green and their insignia is in the shape of an altar. The new insignia has a 12-point representation of the sun, to represent Twelver Shi'ism and 12 Farvardin [1 April], the first day of the consolidation of the Law Enforcement Forces, and the image of the letters for "no", meaning "neither East nor West." An olive branch with 22 leaves will represent the date 22 Bahman [February 11].

Nepal & Bhutan

Nepal

Koirala Unanimously Elected as New Premier

BK2305121491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1135 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Mr. G.P. Koirala is to be the new prime minister of Nepal. The parliamentary party of the ruling Nepali Congress, which met in Kathmandu this afternoon,

elected Mr. Koirala unanimously. The outgoing prime minister and the acting president of the party, Mr. K.P. Bhattarai, proposed his name. AIR [All India Radio] Kathmandu correspondent reports that the swearing-in ceremony of the new prime minister will be held either on Sunday [26 May] or Monday.

In an interview to our correspondent, Mr. Koirala said his government's first priority will be to improve the law and order situation.

The Nepali Congress has secured 110 seats in the 205-member house. The Nepal Communist Party-UML [United Marxist-Leninist] has come in second with 69 seats.

Opposition Efforts To Block Koirala

BK1905095291 Hong Kong AFP in English 0947 GMT 19 May 91

[Text] Kathmandu, May 19 (AFP)—Nepal's main communist opposition party was preparing Sunday to block the appointment of Nepali Congress (NC) politician Girija Prasad Koirala as prime minister, claiming election fraud in his constituency.

The Nepal Communist Party (United Marxist and Leninist NCP-UML) is collecting evidence of vote rigging in Mr. Koirala's constituency of Morang and Sunsari, 280 kilometres (175 miles) southwest of here.

"We are going to discuss Sunday afternoon ... our planned complaint against Mr. Koirala," NCP-UML President Mana Mohan Adhikari told AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, adding that the party would file a complaint with a special election court.

"We have already collected evidence of rigging and booth capturing by Mr. Koirala's supporters from India and his party activists," Mr. Adhikari said. "We have no objections to the Nepali Congress forming a government but we will challenge Mr. Koirala's election victory."

The NC's two leaders, interim prime minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Ganesh Man Singh, were both defeated by communist rivals, leaving Mr. Koirala as front runner for the posts of party leader and prime minister following the NC victory in the May 12 polls.

Congress captured 106 seats in the 205-seat House of Representatives, beating the NCP-UML into second place with 68 seats.

As of Sunday, 199 seats had been declared, with small leftist factions expected to ally with the NCP-UML winning 13 seats and right-wing groups picking up 12.

A senior NC leader defended Mr. Koirala, saying international election observers had visited his constituency and had issued a statement saying the elections were fair.

Political analysts said a complaint against Mr. Koirala could scupper his chance of being selected prime minister when the parliament convenes at the beginning of next month.

The complaint was clearly a manoeuvre by the NCP-UML to gain leverage over the NC, the analysts said.

The two parties dominated a coalition that ruled the Himalayan Kingdom after the overthrow of the partyless Panchayat system following mass demonstrations last year.

"All the good things (about the coalition), the NCP-UML claimed for itself and all the bad things such as inflation, administrative corruption and the destruction of forests they blamed squarely on us," a senior NC official said.

The NCP-UML is expected to present some tough opposition to the NC government and is currently working to forge unity among the fractured left-wing of Nepali politics to strengthen its standing in the parliament.

Analysts have forecasted stormy times ahead, with the NCP-UML encouraging left-wing civil servants and teachers to push ahead with their demands for improved living and educational standards.

The NC had hoped to get the two-thirds majority necessary to amend aspects of the Constitution dealing with foreign affairs and the use of natural resources, but now looks as though it will be hamstrung in these crucial areas, political analysts said.

Final Poll Results Released; NC Wins Majority

BK2305091291 Hong Kong AFP in English 0850 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Kathmandu, May 23 (AFP)—The Nepali Congress [NC] has won its 110th seat and a clear majority in the 205-member parliament, the Election Commission said as final poll results were released Thursday.

Meanwhile, top Congress officials were to meet in the afternoon to choose a new prime minister.

A Congress source said the general-secretary of the Congress, Girija Prasad Koirala, 65, who was elected to parliament from Morang and Sunsari constituencies, would be chosen by the party's central working committee.

The name of the nominee will be forwarded to the royal palace for official appointment as the first elected prime minister in 32 years, with the swearing in likely to be held early next week, the source said.

The committee was to meet at the official residence of outgoing Congress Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, who was unable to win his own Kathmandu seat.

The commission said the Congress' final triumph came in the riding of Bajura, 390 kilometres (243 miles) northwest of here, where Dev Raj Joshi defeated a communist candidate.

The ministry also said Omkar Prasad Gauchan, who recently joined the Congress but was running as an independent candidate, had won in Baglung, 260 kilometres (162 miles) to the west of the capital.

The Congress candidate had been disqualified before the vote.

Final results show the Nepal Communist Party (United Marxist- Leninist) finished second to the Congress, with 69 seats. The United People's Front-Nepal won nine seats, while two other leftist parties, the Nepal Communist Party (Democratic) and the Nepal Workers and Peasants' Party, won two each.

The Congress can also expect support from three rightist parties—the pro-Indian Nepal Sadbhavana Party, which won six seats, the National Democratic Party (Chand), which won three, and the National Democatic party (Thapa), which won one—as well as three right- wing independents.

Forming of New Government Viewed

BK1905010491 Hong Kong AFP in English 1852 GMT 19 May 91

[Text] Kathmandu, May 18 (AFP)—The Nepali Congress (NC) has won another seat bringing to 106 the number it now holds in the 205-seat parliament with the Nepal Communist Party (United Marxist and Leninist NCP-UML) still far behind with 68 seats.

An official announcement late Saturday said the NC had won in Dolpa district 290 kilometres (181 miles) northwest of Kathmandu.

The NC is also leading in Solu district 280kms (175 miles) northeast of Kathmandu, the Nepal Election Commission said.

Of the remaining six constituencies, counting is still going on only in Solu district, while the others will hold another poll Tuesday, with the NC hopeful of at least four of these remaining six seats.

Of the others the United People's Front had nine seats, the pro- India Sadbhavana Party (Goodwill Party) six, the National Democratic Party (Chand) three, the Nepal Workers' and Peasants', the Nepal Communist Party (Democratic) and independents two each and the National Democratic Party (Thapa) only one.

The NC Saturday held a victory march in Morang district 290kms (181 miles) southeast of Kathmandu, with more than 10,000 taking part.

In Kathmandu about 3,000 NCP (UML) activists and supporters held an anti-NC rally shouting slogans like "no more vandalism by the Nepali Congress," and "long live Nepal Communist Party."

A NC source said the party was preparing a meeting of its parliamentary committee to elect a leader for the House of Representatives who will ultimately be the new prime minister succeeding interim Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai sometime next week.

Altogether 20 political parties took part in the May 12 general election, although at least 12 have failed to win a single seat, official sources said.

Earlier an NC spokesman said that, with the support of three smaller parties and two independents, the outcome would "make us comfortable to deal with the tough opposition of the leftist groups."

The fractured elements of Nepal's left wing have begun the process of forging unity with the NCP-UML to present some tough opposition in the House of Representatives.

Rightist parties, including the National Democratic Party (Chand), the National Democratic Party (Thapa) and the Nepal Sadbhavana Party, are expected to align with the NC to boost their majority.

However, the NC has failed to win a two-thirds majority, needed to ratify any treaty with a foreign country concerning natural resources. The NC-dominated interim government began negotiations with India last June on sharing water resources from the vast rivers that flow down from the Himalayas.

The future of any agreement on water resources and oil exploration south of the capital might also be in jeopardy as the NCP-UML have made it clear they oppose any sharing of resources with India, saying it would [be] tantamount to selling out to their southern neighbour.

Girija Prasad Koirala, 65, is expected to be elected prime minister following the defeat in the polls of Mr. Bhattarai and NC leader Ganesh Man Singh.

Analysts are forecasting a stormy time ahead for Mr. Koirala's government, which they say could be hampered by the opposition. The NCP-UML is expected to create problems for the NC among left-wing civil servants and laborers, who have already made a number of demands for improved living and educational standards.

A new government should be formed in the last week of May to prepare for the opening of the parliament in the first week of next month, sources said.

Meanwhile, in Kathmandu, supporters of the NC and the NCP-UML clashed during celebrations by the left-wing party, which has won eight of 10 seats in the Kathmandu valley.

Congress supporters hurled stones at a rally of jubilant NCP-UML members who had been celebrating their party's victory in the area for four days.

NC Strengthens Majority

BK1805051691 Hong Kong AFP in English 0433 GMT 18 May 91

[Text] Kathmandu, May 18 (AFP)—The Nepali Congress Party was shoring up its parliamentary majority Saturday, saying it had won another seat and was expecting to bag six more.

It was officially announced Friday that Nepal's biggest party had captured the simple majority of 103 seats in the 205-seat parliament as results continued to trickle in from last Sunday's election—the first in 32 years in this Himalayan mountain kingdom.

On Saturday, a senior Nepali Congress leader said the figure now stood at 104, with the party hopeful of winning at least six more seats.

Vote-counting in the districts of Solukhumbu, near Mount Everest, and Dolpa and Kalikot, northwest of the capital, showed the Nepali Congress leading by a comfortable margin, he added.

Trailing was the United Marxist Leninist Faction of the Nepal Communist Party. An official announcement confirming the Nepali Congress victory was expected at 0900 GMT Saturday.

The Nepali Congress spokesman said that, with the support of three smaller parties and two independents, the outcome would "make us comfortable to deal with the tough opposition of the leftist groups."

Sources said the Nepali Congress has instructed all its winning candidates to converge on Kathmandu as soon as possible to elect a parliamentary leader, who would become prime minister.

Pakistan

Gandhi's Assassination Condemned, Calm Hoped For

BK2305123991 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 22 May 91

[Mohammad Yamin commentary]

[Text] The tragic news of the assassination of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi last night at a public meeting near Madras in South India has been received the world over with profound shock. A top ranking political leader of India, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, had been his country's prime minister and was one of the top contenders for this office in the current parliamentary elections of India. It is indeed a pity that he met a violent death as the result of a terrorist attack in the midst of his electioneering campaign.

The top Pakistani leadership, including President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, have condemned this cowardly act of terrorism, depriving India of a distinguished political leader of long standing such as Rajiv Gandhi. One is constrained to observe that the current polls in India have been particularly bloody. Not only the murder, the number of killings has been the highest so far when compared with the previous elections in India. The violence before and during the present elections has taken an unprecedented high toll of the candidates for the parliament and state assemblies, almost a dozen, the latest addition being that of Rajiv Gandhi.

One would have thought that with the experience of nine general elections since independence, the Indian electorate and public at large would act in a more mature manner and not allow emotions to get the better of petty election issues. Violence of such nature does not help the cause of democracy.

We in Pakistan are greatly concerned as India is our neighbor and a major regional power. Terrorism, as Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has observed, is to be condemned wherever it occurs, more so if it happens in one's neighborhood. It has a destabilizing effect in the region and disturbs peace and tranquility. Closely linked with the question of political stability is the issue of economic well being. It needs no emphasis to state that progress and prosperity can only be attained in an atmosphere of peace—peace within and peace without.

Geographical proximity of India and Pakistan, and for that matter of the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] countries, makes it imperative that peace is well maintained in each country for the collective benefit of the entire region. Third World countries like ours can ill afford upheavals such as those political ghastly murders of public figures of the stature of Rajiv Gandhi.

The passing away of Rajiv Gandhi will be widely mourned. He was young and could reasonably look forward to many years for useful public life and service both in his own country and in the international sphere. He belonged to what may be described as the foremost political family of India, which had given it three of its prime ministers—Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and Rajiv Gandhi himself. Even before the country's independence, Rajiv's great grandfather, Motilal Nehru, had dominated for decades the politics of the Indian National Congress. Rajiv's death had apparently brought to an end the era of Nehru-Gandhi dynasty's predominance in the affairs of India.

In this hour of grief, the Government of Pakistan as well as its people have nothing but feelings of deep sympathy with the bereaved family as well as for the people of India among whom undoubtedly there is a vast political following of the fallen Indian leader. One also hopes that better sense will prevail among the political activists in India, and Rajiv Gandhi's gruesome murder would not become a precursor of intensified bloodshed and senseless witch-hunting, as was witnessed in the wake of the assassination of his mother Indira Gandhi almost seven years ago.

Prime Minister Condemns Assassination

BK2305164091 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, has condemned the assassination of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and termed it an act of high terrorism. Addressing the All Pakistani Minorities Jurists Conference in Lahore today, he said he had been grieved over the tragic death of the former Indian premier.

Cabinet Discusses Sharif India Visit, Ties

BK2305170291 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] The Federal Cabinet session chaired by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Lahore today reviewed the overall situation prevailing in India after the assassination of the former Indian prime minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. The Cabinet session also considered the postponement of the remaining two phases of elections in India, the situation in occupied Kashmir, and the law and order situation in Pakistan.

Regarding the two-day visit to India of the prime minister, which begins tomorrow morning, to attend the funeral of the late Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the Cabinet expressed the hope that this visit will help in reducing the tension between the two countries, improve mutual understanding, and bring the people of the two countries closer. The Cabinet reiterated that Pakistan desires to strengthen friendly relations with all countries, including India, without compromising on principles.

The Cabinet also adopted a resolution expressing condolences over the tragic death of the late Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and the act of terrorism involved in it. Expressing condolences over the death of the young Indian leader, the resolution expressed the desire to establish good relations with India in the future, and for the stability of democracy in India.

Briefing newsmen about the Cabinet proceedings, the adviser on information and broadcasting, Sheikh Rashid Ahmad, said that during his visit to India the prime minister will have an opportunity to apprise world leaders, who will arrive in New Delhi, of Pakistan's viewpoints on various issues.

In reply to a question, the adviser said Pakistan's principled stand is that all the problems, including the Kashmir issue, should be resolved through dialogue. It is the moral responsibility of Pakistan to provide moral and social support to the Kashmiri freedom fighters. He denied that there are training camps for the freedom fighters in Pakistan.

In reply to a question, Sheikh Rashid Ahmad said the prime minister is making efforts to reduce tension between India and Pakistan by visiting India despite the existing situation on the borders. He said Pakistan is of the firm belief that both the countries should make efforts to eliminate illiteracy, hunger, and poverty.

On Afghanistan, the adviser on information and broadcasting said Pakistan has established contacts with all the friendly countries, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, China, and Japan. The foreign secretary, who was present at the briefing, said a senior official from the Foreign Office has visited Saudi Arabia and Iran in this connection and will leave for Moscow Sunday for talks with Soviet authorities.

On the law and order situation, Sheikh Rashid Ahmad said the government has a comprehensive program on this and will make a decision in this regard. He said the prime minister is visiting Karachi within two days, where he will review the situation in Sindh and make necessary decisions.

Sharif Visits Beg, Briefed on Kashmir, Border

BK2105145291 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1400 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] The prime minister visited the general headquarters in Rawalpindi and met General Mirza Aslam Beg, the chief of the army staff, at his office this morning. The army chief briefed the prime minister on various major issues relating to the Pakistani Army. The prime minister made decisions on the spot on the recommendations of the army chief. Later, he was briefed in detail on the present situation in occupied Kashmir, the increasing tension along the line of control, and threats to Pakistan's security. He was also informed of the steps taken by the Pakistani Army to meet these threats. The prime minister approved all the recommendations made by the general headquarters to boost the armed forces' proficiency to enable them to perform their national defense duties.

Chief of the Army Staff General Mirza Aslam Beg presented a check of 20 million rupees to Nawaz Sharif for the prime minister's relief fund for the cyclone-hit people of Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka

Government Offers Help in Gandhi Investigation

BK2305140891 Hong Kong AFP in English 1346 GMT 23 May 91

[Text] Colombo, May 23 (AFP)—Sri Lanka offered Thursday to help the investigation into former Indian premier Rajiv Gandhi's assassination after the island's dominant Tamil guerrilla group was implicated as a possible suspect.

Although he offered no direct evidence against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Defence Secretary General Cyril Ranatunga said he could not rule out their involvement in the assassination.

"If help is required we will certainly cooperate" with Indian officials, Gen. Ranatunga told reporters here, adding that Sri Lanka had a "constant dialogue" with them.

He said there had been no request for help from any Indian security agency, but that he would respond immediately if one came.

Defence sources and Tamil groups here said the Tigers had the motive, the expertise and the means to carry out the attack in Tamil Nadu, which they have often used as a safe haven for attacks against Sri Lankan forces.

Gen. Ranatunga said a remote control device suspected of having been used in the bomb that killed Mr. Gandhi on Tuesday was similar to the one that triggered the March 2 car bomb here that killed Sri Lanka's defence minister, Ranjan Wijeratne.

An LTTE bomb expert called "Newton," believed to have been in Colombo just before the March 2 attack, moved to the island's eastern Batticaloa District and from there to the LTTE's northern stronghold of Jaffna about a month ago, defence officials said.

The officials said they lost track of him after he escaped to Jaffna—just 60 kilometres (37 miles) across the Palk Strait from Tamil Nadu state in southern India, where Mr. Gandhi was killed.

But they had no evidence linking him to the blast which killed Mr. Gandhi and 16 others, they admitted.

The government has increased naval patrols in the strait, however, Gen. Ranatunga said.

The government-controlled daily news newspaper said that despite the denials, suspicion was growing that the LTTE had been involved in the killing of Mr. Gandhi, who as Indian prime minister warred against the movement for more than two years.

"Significantly, Gandhi died not by a bullet but by an explosive blast, an area the LTTE specialises in," the newspaper said.

Colombo has accused the LTTE of carrying out scores of bomb attacks in the capital Colombo and elsewhere in the island since 1986.

Although the "Tigers" have neither condemned nor condoned the assassination of Mr. Gandhi, a former friend who became a bitter foe, they have denied involvement in it.

Mr. Gandhi had earlier supported the LTTE but launched a major offensive against the guerrillas after they rejected a July 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord which sought to put an end to separatist violence in northern Sri Lanka.

The LTTE killed some 1,140 Indian troops during their 32-month deployment in the island's Tamil-dominated Northeast, where the LTTE is fighting to establish a separate Tamil state.

Day of Mourning Honors Rajiv Gandhi

BK2405113291 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 24 May 91

[Text] The government of Sri Lanka has declared a day of mourning today in honor of the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi, former prime minister of India. The national flag will be flown at half mast on all government and public buildings.

A four-member team led by Prime Minister D.B. Wijetunge represented the government at the funeral of Mr. Gandhi in New Delhi this afternoon. The other members of the team are Tourism and Rural Industrial Development Minister S. Thondaman, Presidential Adviser of International Affairs Bradman Weerakoon, and the prime minister's secretary, K.M. Abeysinghe.

20 Killed in Eastern Batticaloa District

BK2005090791 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] In Sri Lanka, 16 Tamil rebels and four civilians were killed yesterday in the eastern part of the country. Military officials said 15 Tamil militants were shot dead while trying to escape on bicycles during a search in village. Troops have been engaged in a search and destroy operation for the past three days in four villages in Eastern Batticaloa.

7 LTTE Members Among 16 Killed in Northeast

BK2105095091 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] In Sri Lanka, 16 people, including seven LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] militants, have been killed in continuing violence in the northeast in the last 24 hours. Military sources in Colombo said armed militants fired at a tractor on the Malwatte-Amparai road, killing nine persons. Five militants were killed in Palali, northern Jaffna and two in Batticaloa. One soldier died in the fighting in Batticaloa.